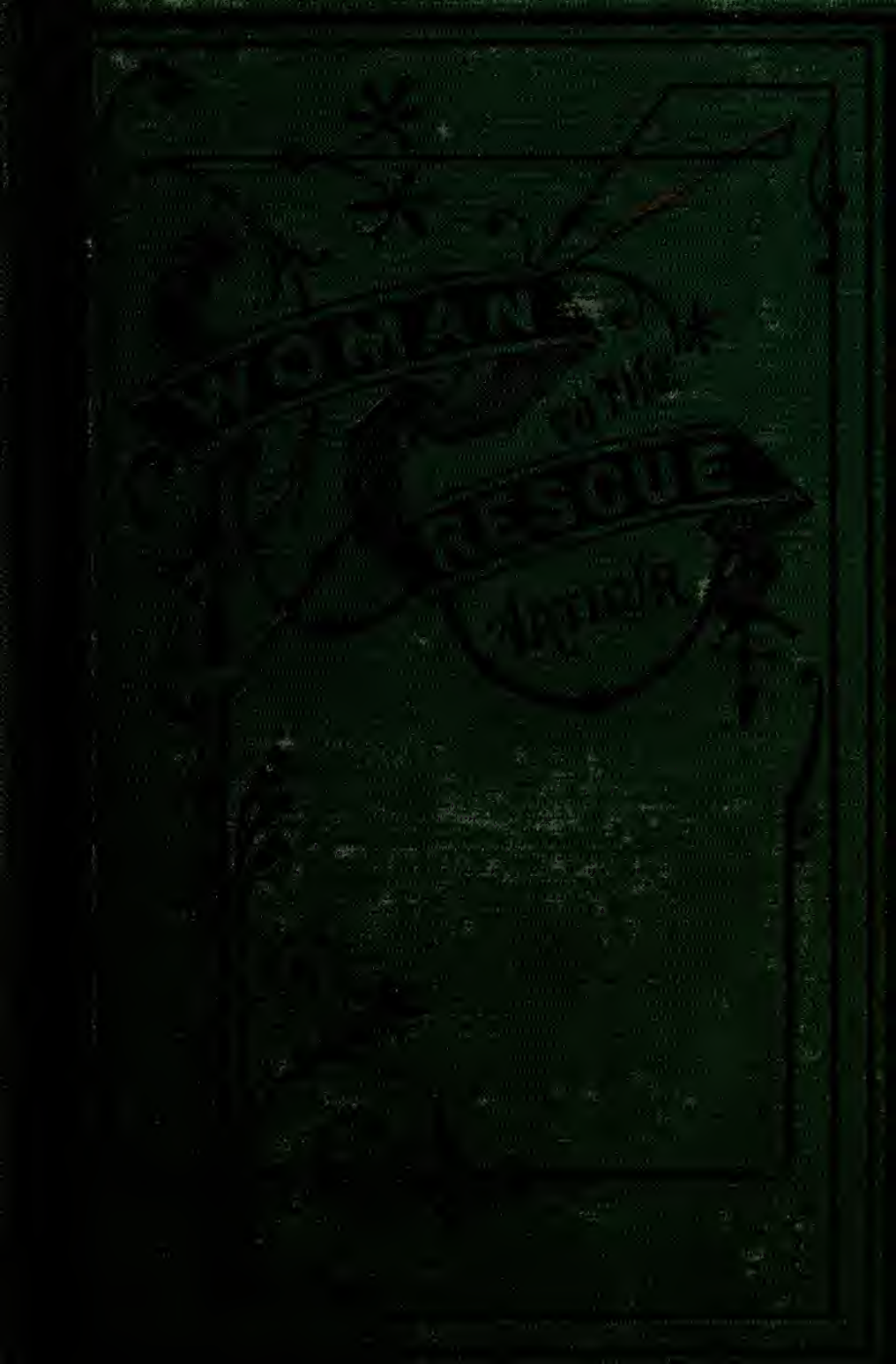

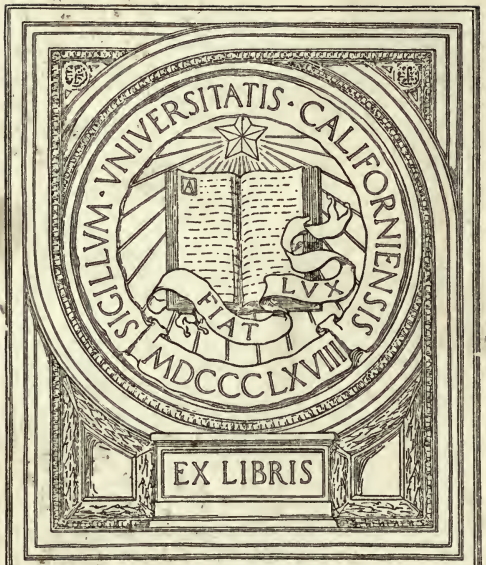
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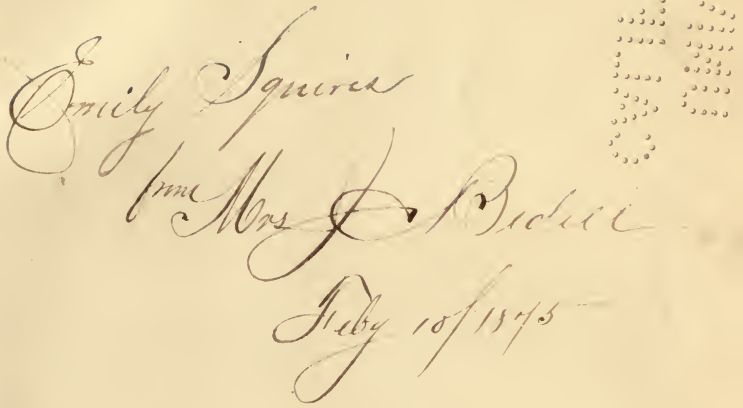

Emily Squires
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IN THE STRONGHOLD.

WOMAN TO THE RESCUE.

A STORY OF THE NEW CRUSADE.

BY

T. S. ARTHUR.

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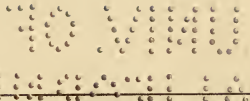

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"Go, feel what I have felt,
Go, bear what I have borne;
Sink 'neath a blow a father dealt,
And the cold, proud world's scorn.
Thus struggle on from year to year,
Thy sole relief the scalding tear.

"Go, weep as I have wept
O'er a loved father's fall;
See every cherished promise swept,
Youth's sweetness turned to gall;
Hope's faded flowers strewed all the way
That led me up to woman's day.

"Go, kneel as I have knelt;
Implore, beseech, and pray,
Strive the besotted heart to melt,
The downward course to stay;
Be cast with bitter curse aside,—
Thy prayers burlesqued, thy tears defied.

"Go, stand where I have stood,
And see the strong man bow;

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With gnashing teeth, lips bathed in blood,
And cold and livid brow;
Go catch his wandering glance, and see
There mirrored his soul's misery.

"Go, hear what I have heard,—
The sobs of sad despair,
As memory's feeling fount hath stirred,
And its revealings there
Have told him what he might have been,
Had he the drunkard's fate foreseen.

"Go to thy mother's side,
And her crushed spirit cheer;
Thine own deep anguish hide,
Wipe from her cheek the tear;
Mark her dimmed eye, her furrowed brow,
The gray that streaks her dark hair now,
The toil-worn frame, the trembling limb,
And trace the ruin back to him
Whose plighted faith, in early youth,
Promised eternal love and truth,
But who, forsworn, hath yielded up
This promise to the deadly cup,
And led her down from love and light,
From all that made her pathway bright,
And chained her there, 'mid want and strife,
That lowly thing,—a drunkard's wife!
And stamped on childhood's brow, so mild,
That withering blight,—a drunkard's child!

"Go, hear, and see, and feel, and know
All that my soul hath felt and known,
Then look within the wine-cup's glow;
See if its brightness can atone;
Think if its flavor you would try
If all proclaimed, *'Tis drink and die.*

"Tell me I hate the bowl,—
Hate is a feeble word;
I loathe, abhor, my very soul
By strong disgust is stirred
Whene'er I see, or hear, or tell
Of the DARK BEVERAGE OF HELL!

WOMAN TO THE RESCUE.

A STORY OF THE NEW CRUSADE.

CHAPTER I.

THE wind was up, wailing and sobbing around the poor little home of Luke Sterling, and dashing the sleety rain in angry gusts against its half-glazed windows. An hour before, the gloomy day had died.

A thin face was pressed close to one of the panes and a pair of sad eyes looked out, trying to penetrate the darkness.

"Oh dear! I wish papa would come."

The face disappeared from the window, and Mrs. Sterling, who had been watching for her husband, crossed the room to where a sick child lay upon an old settee.

"Why don't papa come? I'm so hot and tired,

and my head hurts so. Oh dear! I wish he'd come back," moaned the child, fretfully.

Mrs. Sterling sat down, and taking the feverish hands of her little girl in both of hers, pressed them to her lips, saying,

"He'll be here right soon now. The doctor may have been out, you know."

The child shut her eyes heavily, and Mrs. Sterling sat holding her hot hands and listening for the sound of her husband's feet for over ten minutes. Beyond this she could not bear the suspense of passive waiting. Alice, who had been sick all day, had become much worse since night fell. It was almost an hour since her husband went for Doctor Sandford, whose house was just across the town, not over ten minutes' walk from where they lived. What was keeping him so long? For the past twenty or thirty minutes the heart of Mrs. Sterling had been growing heavier and heavier, and fears she had too good cause to entertain were crowding upon her.

The deeply-flushed face and heavy breathing of the child, the restless tossings and moanings, the cries of pain, so filled her with anxiety that she at last determined to go for the doctor herself.

"Why, Polly Sterling!" exclaimed Mrs. Payne, her next-door neighbor, as the white, alarmed face of Mrs. Sterling was suddenly revealed in her open door. "What's the matter? Has anything happened?"

"Won't you come in and stay with Alice while I go for the doctor?"

"Why, of course I will," answered the neighbor, promptly. "But where's Luke?"

"I don't know." Mrs. Sterling shook her head mournfully.

"Is Alice worse?"

"She's very sick, and I'm afraid to put off seeing the doctor any longer."

"But it's a dreadful night for you to go out in. Didn't George come home this evening? I thought he always came on Tuesdays and Saturdays?"

"He used to be very regular in coming home, but they're busy at the shop now, and he often has to work at night. Some weeks I only see him on Sundays."

"Well, that's curious," remarked Mrs. Payne. "Andy White works over at Salter's, and he's home oftener than that, I know."

"Are you sure?" asked Mrs. Sterling, turning

suddenly upon her neighbor. There was a deeper trouble in her face.

"Yes, I'm very sure; and if George doesn't come home more than once a week, you'd better see to it, and know the reason why. There are a great many temptations in a place like this, and growing-up boys should be looked after pretty closely. I don't think much of Salter's as a school for lads; there are lots of the hardest kind of men there. But I've no business to worry you about this now. I'll go right in and stay with Alice until you get back."

Out into the cold and stormy night, thinly clad, went Mrs. Sterling, and made her way with rapid steps across the town. She was wet with the driving rain and chilled to the heart when she reached the house of Dr. Sandford.

"Has my husband been here?" she asked, on seeing the doctor.

"Yes; he was here an hour ago. Hasn't he taken home the medicine?"

Doctor Sandford looked astonished, and Mrs. Sterling saw a flash of anger in his eyes. The poor woman could only shake her head in reply.

"Too bad, too bad!" exclaimed the doctor,

breaking across the room in two or three long strides and then coming back to Mrs. Sterling. "Is there nothing left in the man?—no pity, no natural feeling, no humanity! I gave him a prescription to be taken immediately, and the money to pay for it, as he had none; and instead of getting the medicine for his sick child, he has gone and spent it for rum!"

Doctor Sandford was a kind-hearted man, but of a nervous temperament and easily excited. He saw, by the shocked, ashen face of the poor wife, that he had gone beyond true feeling and a wise discretion.

"I should have known better," he added, in a softer voice. "But it can't be helped now. How is the child?"

"Very sick, doctor. Oh, I wish you'd come over and see her. She has a very high fever, and moans and throws herself about, and is getting flighty."

"Too bad!" exclaimed the doctor again. "She should have had medicine an hour ago, and would, but for—"

He checked himself, holding back his indignation for the poor wife's sake.

The rush and roar of the storm, as the wind broke through the bare branches of the great trees that stood in front of the doctor's pleasant home, and its sleety dash against the windows of his office, was a strong argument in favor of writing another prescription instead of making a visit—an argument that found support in the fact that he had already a large bill against Mr. Sterling for medical service, the settlement of which was so remote as to be left out of all his calculations.

But Doctor Sandford had known Mrs. Sterling in other and better days, and still bore for her a strong friendly regard. Well did he remember the fair promise of her wedding-day, when she gave herself to Luke Sterling, the handsome, thrifty young storekeeper, with whom half the girls in town were said to be in love. And so his kind heart, his pity and his old friendly feeling were stronger in the argument than a love of personal ease or mere self-interest.

"Run back home as quickly as your feet will carry you," he said; "I'll be there in ten minutes."

And Doctor Sandford was as good as his word. He knew pretty well what the case needed, and brought medicines along with him. The poor

mother watched his face as he sat feeling the child's pulse, and saw little to assure her anxious heart in its grave expression.

"I will be over early in the morning," said the doctor as he went away. A fierce blast swept in through the door as he was shutting it behind him, extinguishing the single light that burned in the room, leaving Mrs. Sterling in total darkness. Almost as deep as this darkness was the night that had fallen upon her soul. Had it not been for the sick child who needed her, the wretched woman, in whose heart every hope lay dead or dying, would have fallen to the floor in a helpless abandonment of herself to the despairing influences of the hour. But the quick outcry of Alice roused her to duty; and relighting the lamp, she prepared and gave the medicine which Doctor Sandford had left. The effect of this medicine was soon apparent in a diminished restlessness, and in half an hour Alice was asleep. Still, her breathing was heavy, her face flushed and her skin hot.

Ease of mind in one direction only gave opportunity for anxiety in another. Again and again she went to the window, and stood with her face pressed close to the chilly panes, trying to see into the outer

darkness and listening with repressed breathing for the sound of coming feet. But only the dropping and splashing of the rain and the moaning, rushing and roaring of the storm-laden wind came to her ears.

It was an hour since the doctor went away, and still her husband had not returned. From the settee on which Alice lay sleeping, to the window, back and forth she passed with a restlessness that grew stronger every moment. Sometimes she would strike her hands suddenly together and throw up her eyes in a wild, beseeching appeal to Heaven; sometimes she would clasp her hands across her forehead and stand still with staring orbs, like one bereft of reason; and once she dropped helplessly upon her knees by the side of her sick child, and burying her face, remained motionless for a long time. When she arose, she was calmer and there was a softer expression about her troubled mouth. Just then the door was pushed quietly open, and Mrs. Payne came in to see if the sick child was improving. She put her arm about the slender form of Mrs. Sterling as they stood silently looking upon the sleeping child, and so gave her that speechless assurance of sympathy which goes deeper than words.

Mrs. Payne knew how to sympathize with her nearly heart-broken neighbor, for the green things in her life had not all been spared from the scorching ruin that was desolating so many of the fair homes of Delhi. She had been a widow for over three years, but no sweet memories gathered about the grave of her husband. She had never decked it with a flower nor made to the unmarked spot a single visit of love. The bare thought of it made her shiver.

"You will stay with Alice a little while?" said Mrs. Sterling, moving back from the settee.

"Oh, but you're not going to-night?" returned Mrs. Payne, who understood what she meant. "Just listen to the wind; and it's raining in torrents."

"I must go; there is no help for it. The more dreadful the storm, the greater the necessity," replied Mrs. Sterling. And she took down from the wall a hood and cloak, both still wet from the rain which had drenched her a little while before, and put them on hurriedly. "I won't be away long."

And before Mrs. Payne could make any further remonstrance, she had passed out of the door.

CHAPTER II.

DELHI is a beautiful town in the centre of a rich agricultural region, and has a population of nearly five thousand. At the time of which we write it had over thirty bars and drinking saloons, or one for every forty of the male population above the age of sixteen. Some of these saloons were fitted up in a costly and attractive style, and at night their richly-colored lamps could be seen on every street and in all directions, turn which way you would, inviting young and old to enter. Some of the keepers of these saloons had grown rich, and their residences were among the handsomest in the place; but just in the degree that they grew richer some in Delhi had grown poorer, for they added nothing to the common stock of wealth, nor to the thrift that produces or the prudence that saves. They were the parasites and vermin that feed on and suck out the rich juices of society, and weaken, impoverish and destroy.

There was scarcely a family in town, from the clergyman's down to the poor mechanic's, that was

free from the hurt of these drinking saloons. They flourished in spite of temperance societies, grand jury presentments, restrictive State laws, the pulpit and the courts, and in spite of the broken hearts of wives and mothers who cried for help in vain. The whole community was in bondage to the thirty saloon-keepers, and paid them tribute as demanded —not in money alone, but in precious lives.

It seems incredible. A town of five thousand souls in a Christian nation, numbering seven churches and hundreds of Christian men and women—a town of large wealth and extensive industries, of education, refinement and intelligence—it seems incredible, we say, that such a community should be held utterly bound by thirty men; and such men! We hear, in times past, of bands of outlaws coming down upon defenceless villages and plundering the weak inhabitants, and of robber knights holding by armed bands large districts of country in their iron grasp, and draining out the substance and lives of the people at will. But history gives no instance of such a craven and coward submission as that to which Delhi had given herself up for years.

Of the thirty men who held this beautiful town

prostrate beneath their feet, at least one-half had, at some period in their lives, been under arrest for offences against law and order; six had been convicted of crimes and suffered imprisonment—one of them for a term of seven years. Only three were men of education, and they had lived bad lives. Several were professed gamblers, and carried on their evil trade night and day, thus inflicting a double wrong upon the community. The majority were foreigners, but all these were naturalized citizens and active politicians, doing good service to their party on every election-day. They were men who never missed a vote. Coarse, common and of low instincts were most of these thirty rulers of Delhi, and neither they nor their families could gain admission into any of the refined and cultured circles of the place. Good and true men denounced their calling as evil and lifted warning voices against them. Every day the crushing tread of their iron heels was felt by the people; every day the drain of substance went on; every day saw a rain of tears in some stricken and desolate home; every day their evil work set itself up before the eyes of all. There was wreck and ruin everywhere, and no help!

Thus it was in Delhi at the time our story opens. Good Templars and Sons of Temperance held regular meetings and tried to stem the tide of ruin that was bearing so many to destruction, but they entered upon no aggressive work. A malign spell was upon the community. It would not arouse itself. Men who had spent their whole lives in conquering difficulties, who had organized armies and led them through fierce campaigns to victory, held back from leadership now, and grew coward in the presence of thirty men with King Whisky at their back.

Wives saw their husbands drifting toward the great maelstrom of intemperance that year by year engulfed hundreds in Delhi; weeping mothers stood with hands stretched out toward their receding sons; sisters saw their brothers go down amid the seething waters, and no one sprang to the rescue. Their tears and anguish, their pleadings, their wild cries for help, found no response. Men—husbands, fathers, brothers—organized society, determined its character, made and executed its laws, set up whom they would and put down whom they would, and men were afraid of King Alcohol and his band of mean subalterns, one of whom could

chase a thousand and two put ten thousand ordinary citizens to flight.

We write in shame, but truth is truth. Ah! if it were only in Delhi that good and brave and just men lost their clear judgment and courageous hearts and higher and nobler sense of duty when they stood in the presence of this robber king and his wretched crew, we might rejoice even in our sorrow for an oppressed and pillaged neighbor. But there is scarcely a city, a town or a neighborhood in all our magnificent land where he has not established his cruel despotism, and where he does not subsidize, influence and control the laws.

Is it any marvel that helpless, heart-breaking women, who suffer most deeply from the curse of a whisky despotism, should have asked for and demanded the ballot in order that, at a single grand uprising, they might do what their husbands, fathers and brothers have failed to do—sweep this despotism from the land?

At the corner of two of the best streets in Delhi, right in the centre of business, stood the "Hanlan House." It was kept by one Jimmy Hanlan, as he was familiarly called, and was fitted up with many attractions. It was not a house for the enter-

tainment of travelers, having a certain number of beds and other appliances necessary in a regular hotel, as required by law, but only an eating and drinking saloon. The law did not contemplate, in its license to sell intoxicating drinks, the establishment of a "house" like this. It existed in violation of the clear intent and plain expression of the law. All the more intelligent and influential citizens of Delhi knew that this was so; and yet for over ten years Jimmy Hanlan had flaunted his signs by day and flashed out his red and blue lamps at night on the corner of Elm and Main streets, and no one had said him nay.

When the "Hanlan House" was opened, Luke Sterling was the owner of a store full of goods at No. 70 Main street, and had just built himself a beautiful residence in the prettiest part of the town at a cost of nearly ten thousand dollars. Jimmy Hanlan, a smart but rather coarse man, had been a porter in his store; but not being over-fond of work, he had saved up a few hundred dollars, and with that sum and the credit he was able to get from a wholesale liquor dealer in town, who always stood ready to help such enterprising young men as Jimmy whenever they wished to set up for them-

selves in this particular line of business, started a saloon. Mr. Sterling and two of his neighbors, who felt some interest in the enterprising young fellow, signed his application for a license, though they very well knew that in his case the license law, in its true intent, was to be evaded. But this law, in consequence of just such weak and wicked connivance, had become a dead letter throughout the State.

Jimmy's saloon was the most attractive place of the kind in Delhi, and he found a good run of the best class of custom from the beginning. Luke Sterling, who had not been in the habit of visiting a tavern once in a month, dropped into the "Hanlan House" every day to see how Jimmy was getting along, and of course always called for something to drink by way of encouraging the new enterprise. It was not a great while before inclination instead of interest in Hanlan drew his steps thitherward. At a certain hour on the morning of each day he found his thoughts turning to the new saloon and a picture of its attractive interior coming up before his mental vision. The pleasant taste of one of Jimmy's rare concoctions would be upon his tongue, and he would feel in imagination the warmth of it

fine exhilaration along every nerve and fibre of his body. Then he would come from behind his counter or leave his desk and go into the "Hanlan House" to see how things were looking there. He had loaned the man two hundred and fifty dollars, with which to put a new and more attractive front to his saloon and to get a fancy display lamp for the pavement, and he naturally enough wanted to keep the run of Jimmy's business to see if all was coming out right.

After making this loan, and so getting a kind of personal interest in the success of the saloon, Sterling began to make more frequent visits. Afternoon and evening calls were made almost every day, and he rarely went in without taking a drink, and sometimes as many as two or three. He always met business friends and old acquaintances at the "Hanlan House," and especially in the evening, when some of "the best men in the town" might be found at the saloon talking over the news of the day, politics more especially, and inviting each other to try the flavor of some of Jimmy's fancy drinks.

The American custom of asking a friend to drink with you had its strict observance in Delhi. It was

scarcely possible for a man who knew almost every one in town, as did Luke Sterling, to visit the principal saloon without giving or receiving two or three invitations to take a drink. It would have been felt as unsocial not to have offered the one, and been regarded as a slight not to have accepted the other. It is this custom that hastens the ruin of so many thousands, who, but for its existence, would take only a single glass on visiting a tavern, instead of two, three, and often half a dozen, ending, as is too often the case, in a drunken debauch.

Sterling had been married just seven years when the "Hanlan House" was opened, and during that time the life of Mrs. Sterling had flowed along like a quiet stream through green meadows and pleasant landscapes. At her marriage she had brought her husband a property of over twenty thousand dollars, which was soon afterward invested with her full consent in his business, then well established and prosperous. A tenderer, truer wife no man ever possessed. She had married Luke Sterling because she loved him, and love had grown deeper and stronger with every year of their wedded life. Her person, her fortune and her happiness she had

given into his keeping with a confidence that knew not even the shadow of a doubt.

Ah! when the shadow fell at last, clear and strong as the shadow of a tree in the broad sunlight, what agony filled her heart! The opening of Jimmy Hanlan's saloon had not troubled her. There were over a dozen bars and saloons in Delhi before this one began its baleful work, but the possibility of suffering from their evil influence was far away from her thoughts. If there was a man in all the neighborhood freer from danger on this account than any one else, that man was her husband. Such was her confidence. He was not a temperance man, so called—not an advocate for total abstinence or restrictive laws, but for manly freedom. He could take a glass of wine or beer, or even brandy, when occasion offered, or let it alone, just as he pleased. He stood above the weaknesses of appetite. Happy for him and for her had this indeed been so. But, alas! it was not. Like tens and hundreds of thousands in our land, he could not habitually indulge in the use of any drink containing alcohol without a steady growth of appetite and a steady breaking down of the power to restrain the demands of that appetite. The temp-

tation to drink habitually and with a larger freedom came with the establishment of the new saloon. Going first to encourage Hanlan and to see how he got along from day to day, he soon found that the bar had attractions strong enough to take him there on their own account. There was something pleasant to him in the sphere of the place, it was so bright and cheerful, and the friends he met there were so jolly and cordial. And then Jimmy Hanlan had a way of mixing a glass of liquor that made it seem doubly palatable.

So strong was Mrs. Sterling's faith in her husband, so confident was she in her security, that the odor of liquor which now came frequently on his breath did not awaken the smallest concern. The fear of Luke's becoming intemperate was far from her. There were some new phases in his temper—a growing irritability and a nervous restlessness, especially in the morning—that troubled her at times. He was not the Luke of old. But she knew that he had many and increasing business cares, and to this she attributed the change.

One afternoon—the "Hanlan House" had now been open for a year—Mrs. Sterling called in to see a neighbor, the wife of a promising young lawyer

named Gordon. She and Mrs. Gordon had been schoolgirls together, and were strongly attached. Since their marriage they had lived near each other, and were in the habit of meeting every day.

Mrs. Sterling was much pained to discover her friend in tears and greatly distressed about something.

"My dear, dear Amy!" she exclaimed, throwing her arms about her neck in the warmth of her feelings. "What is the matter? No one dead, I hope?"

Mrs. Gordon hid her face, sobbing, on the bosom of her friend.

"What is it, dear? Tell me," urged Mrs. Sterling as the two women sat down. "What has happened?"

"Nothing has happened. I'm only weak and nervous to-day. You know I've not been feeling well for some time," replied Mrs. Gordon, trying to rally herself.

"I know that something has been troubling you," said Mrs. Sterling. "Now, what is it, Amy dear? Tell me all about it. Maybe I can help you."

There was an expression in Mrs. Gordon's face as she lifted her head and looked for a few moments

steadily at her friend that sent a strange feeling to Mrs. Sterling's heart. It had in it both pain and surprise. She shook her head in a sorrowful kind of way as she answered:

"No, Polly; you can't help me."

"I can help you with love and sympathy, if in no other way."

The dreary look did not go out of her friend's eyes, nor the sad expression fade away from her lips. Then Mrs. Sterling, urging her still further, said:

"Nothing has gone wrong with Mr. Gordon, I hope?"

She saw a shade of bitterness sweep across her friend's face.

"Wrong in his affairs, I mean?" she added, quickly, fearing that she might have touched a deeper trouble than she had dreamed of or had any right to meddle with.

"Oh, Polly, if I dared to tell you!" cried out Mrs. Gordon, clutching her friend's arms with a sudden grip, as of one struggling with a spasm. A deadly pallor came over her face, and every muscle quivered with pain. "I must talk to somebody, or my heart will break."

"My dear, dear friend, how you distress me! What does all this mean?"

"It means," answered Mrs. Gordon, growing calm in a few moments, "that the evil thing I have dreaded all my life is at my door to-day."

"What evil thing?"

"Ah, if I could bring myself to tell you! But it is so dreadful—so sorrowful!"

Mrs. Gordon leaned her face down again upon the bosom of her friend and wept as before, but she soon composed herself. And now, the strength of her passion having subsided, she could speak in a steady voice:

"I've been wanting to talk with you for a good while about a matter that distresses me beyond measure. The truth is, Polly, our husbands are in great danger."

"Our husbands!" exclaimed Mrs. Sterling, all the color going out of her face. "What danger?"

"There is a place at the corner of Elm and Main streets," replied Mrs. Gordon, "that will ruin more men in a year, twice told, than will be saved by all the churches in town."

"You mean Jimmy Hanlan's saloon?"

"Yes. Before it was opened Frank rarely, if

ever, drank anything at a public-house. If he wanted a glass of wine, or anything else, he took it at home; and this not often. He didn't seem to care for liquor as much as some other men. But since that Hanlan set up a saloon, he has been gradually falling away from his good habits, until—"

The poor wife's voice choked, and tears fell silently over her cheeks. It was then that the dark shadow fell suddenly across the sunny life of Mrs. Sterling. The questions, "Is Luke, too, in danger? Is Luke drifting out also upon the dark river that sweeps, year by year, its tens of thousands to dishonored graves?" flashed through her mind and sent the blood in chilling currents back upon her heart.

The two women, with pale faces and silent lips, sat looking at each other, oppressed with a sense of weakness. They were in the presence of a great calamity from which there seemed no way of escape.

The veil of confidence had dropped from the eyes of Mrs. Sterling which had until now kept her from noticing the drift in her husband's course that was taking him out of safe waters and into a current that set toward a dangerous coast.

CHAPTER III.

THUS the two friends sat, silent and borne down by a sense of weakness, when a neighbor came in. Mrs. Gordon rose quickly and gave her hand to the visitor. She was a woman past fifty years of age, with a calm, patient face, whereon you read the story of a life in which trial, suffering and sorrow had found rest and comfort in a complete submission to the divine will. Her name was Mrs. Rhoda Green. In religious faith she was a Methodist, one of the old-time sisters who believed in prayer, and who every day entered into her closet and shut the door and lifted her heart to Him whose ears are always open to those who call upon his name.

It was the habit of Sister Green to submit all things to God. In every trial or difficulty, in every doubt or fear, in every trouble or misfortune, she went to her heavenly Father, and with the simple trust of a child laid her case before him and asked for the grace she needed, whether it

were the grace of courage to enter upon a conflict or the grace of submission to bear what was inevitable.

Every one in Delhi knew Sister Rhoda Green. Those who came nearest to her loved her most, and by all she was held in much respect. Literally did she try to do her Saviour's work in visiting the sick, clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, but never regarded her duty as done until she had awakened in the minds of those to whom she ministered a deep sense of spiritual poverty and nakedness, and of their lost condition through sin.

As Sister Green held the hand of Mrs. Gordon and looked into her face she saw the trouble that overshadowed it. And as she turned and spoke in her kind, sweet way to Mrs. Sterling she saw that her countenance was troubled also. The smile which had played about her lips died off, and she said, in her gentle but earnest way,

"Nothing wrong, I hope? How is little Bessie?"

"Very well," replied Mrs. Gordon, trying to rally herself and put on a cheerful air.

"All well at home?" turning to Mrs. Sterling.

"Yes, thank you."

A few moments of silence, then Mrs. Gordon, after giving her visitor a chair, said,

"We were talking about Jimmy Hanlan's saloon. It's doing a great deal of harm, Mrs. Green—more than all the rest put together, I'm afraid. So many of our best men go there. I heard last week that John Wharton spends half his time there. It's dreadful. And he used to be such a fine man. Poor Katy! my heart aches for her."

Mrs. Gordon's voice broke a little, and only by a strong effort was she able to keep back the sob that trembled in her throat.

The face of Mrs. Green became very serious and thoughtful.

"Yes," she replied, "it was a dark day for us when Hanlan opened his saloon. I saw how it would be when he put in that great window and made everything look so gay and attractive, and, as I heard some one remark at the time, so respectable. Most of the saloons were low places, and our best people didn't like to be seen in them. Our gentlemen kept themselves away. But now you rarely pass the corner of Main and Elm streets without seeing a lawyer or a merchant going in or coming out. And, what is worst of all, too many

of our most promising young men are following their bad example."

The shadow of a man passing the window fell across the floor. In the next moment some one came in noisily. The blood mounted to Mrs. Gordon's temples as she started to her feet and went out into the hall. A few hurried remonstrances came in a repressed voice to the visitors' ears, and then the door of Mr. Gordon's office, which was on the other side of the hall, was heard to open and shut. Mrs. Gordon's face was still flushed when she came back into the parlor, and she had an air of painful embarrassment.

"And to what is it all leading?" said Sister Green as Mrs. Gordon returned, taking up the thread of her discourse. "To sorrow and shame, to the loss of health and property, and, saddest of all, to the loss of human souls. Our Sabbaths are openly desecrated by such men as Hanlan, and the law made to restrict their dreadful traffic—made, I fear, by men bribed to leave it defective—set wholly at defiance. Nothing so discourages my heart as this. It is not enough that for six days and nights in every week this awful work goes on. Useful industry stops and takes its Sabbath's rest,

but six days and nights are not enough for the trade of Satan. He must gather on Sunday too his harvest of human souls."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Sterling; "is not this Sunday law enforced? Surely it ought to be."

"If," replied Sister Green, "your husband were to open his store on Sunday and sell his goods, all made for useful purposes, and not to hurt his neighbor, he would have public sentiment at once arrayed against him and the law invoked to prevent his desecration of the Sabbath. But when the whisky-seller sets a more stringent law at defiance—a law made specially to protect the people from his hurtful business for at least one day in seven—we prove too weak to restrain him. Judges, law officers and juries are all at fault or on his side. You cannot convict him of a breach of the law, though the judge before whom he is tried and the jurymen who clear him know, every man of them, that he breaks the law a hundred times or more on every Sabbath day. He comes off triumphant, and the men who inform upon him and do their best to stop his wicked work are sneered at by the people, or, still worse, persecuted and injured in their good name or in their business. Only last week I went to Judge

Isett and asked him if nothing could be done about this dreadful Sunday business, which is troubling me more than I can tell."

"And what did he say?" asked Mrs. Gordon, from whose face the crimson stains had gone out, leaving it paler than before.

"His looks said that I had better mind my house and say my prayers. I am quick at reading faces. He shrugged his shoulders and lifted his eyebrows and set his mouth a little hard.

"'Well, Mrs. Green,' said he, 'what would you have done about it?'

"'I would have it stopped, Judge Isett,' said I. 'It's against the law, and should be stopped.'

"'I know it's against the law,' he replied.

"'Then,' said I, 'why don't you stop it?'

"'It is not any more my business than it is yours, Mrs. Green,' answered the judge, 'nor, indeed, half as much. I haven't anything to do with bringing cases into court; the people, you and the rest of them, must do that. My business is to hear cases for the people, submit them to juries and sentence those who are found guilty of breaking the law.'

"'Then,' said I, 'whose duty is it to see to these things?'

"'It's the duty of the people,' returned the judge, in that cold, polite manner he can assume when he chooses.

"'How are the people to stop it?' I asked.

"'By having the offenders arrested and tried under the law,' he replied. 'This law,' he added, 'is very plain, and prohibits, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, every one from selling or giving away spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider on Sunday. A citizen can go before a magistrate and give information against any one whom he has seen violating the Sunday law. The magistrate will then issue a warrant; and armed with this warrant, the constable will arrest the offender, who will have to appear in court and answer to the charge made against him. If found guilty, he will be punished. That is the simple, straightforward process, madam. Nothing could be plainer. If the people in Delhi want the sale of liquor on Sunday stopped, they can stop it. The whole thing is in their hands.'

"'But, Judge Isett,' said I, 'why is it that no convictions have ever been made in this county? You have had Sunday liquor cases before you, but the offenders have always escaped.'

"'That was because no evidence strong enough

to convict was presented to the court. You cannot convict a man on insufficient evidence,' he replied.

"'But it was notorious that the men who were tried kept their bars open on Sunday,' said I. 'Men and boys were seen going in and drinking hour after hour, from morning until night. Stronger evidence of the breach of a law could hardly be found in any case of crime than in these cases. What does it mean? I can't understand it, Judge Isett.'

"'Not a witness came forward to swear that he saw spirituous or malt liquor, wine or cider drank, as alleged. There must be absolute proof of this, or no jury can or will convict. Here lies the difficulty. A man must himself taste the contents of a glass from which he sees another drink before he can swear positively as to the character of the liquor imbibed. He may believe—nay, may be morally certain—that the liquor is whisky or beer, may see it poured from a bottle labeled whisky or see it drawn foaming from a keg or barrel; but unless some of the liquor pass his own lips, he cannot swear beyond his belief as to its character, and mere belief won't convict a man of crime.'

"'But surely, judge,' I urged, 'out of the hun-

dreds who drink liquor in our saloons on Sunday, some one might be found who would swear to the fact.'

"'It isn't an easy thing to find a man,' he replied, 'who is willing to come forward and swear that he went into a saloon on Sunday and drank a glass of whisky. Your respectable temperance man would hardly do this, and your Sunday drinker is too good a friend of the saloon-keeper to injure him. It is this difficulty of getting evidence that obstructs the course of law in these cases, Mrs. Green. No man likes to set himself up as a common informer or to hire another to become one. There is in all communities an instinctive feeling of contempt for this thing.'

"'Then,' said I, 'the law is a dead letter.'

"'About as near to it as a thing can well be,' the judge returned; and I am not mistaken when I say that there was a tone of triumph in his voice.

"'And men made the law,' I said, speaking with the stern rebuke that was in my heart—'made it that it might be broken—a law to deceive the people—a law so deftly framed that its execution is next to impossible. And other men, the great body of the people who take upon themselves the

exclusive right to regulate society and provide for its well-being, tamely and weakly permit themselves to be cheated and wronged. And we who suffer most deeply from all social evils can only fold our hands in helpless sorrow. We have no voice when men are chosen who are to make the laws, and no voice when men are chosen to execute them. We stand dumb and powerless. Men make sorry work, Judge Isett, in their efforts to deal with a question that above all others most deeply concerns the people. More than four-fifths of all the crime, suffering, pauperism and insanity in the land —as you well know—comes from a legalized wrong. And State and nation draw large revenues from a few men who pay for the privilege of pauperizing the land and filling its prisons, poorhouses and charitable homes with thousands and tens of thousands of miserable victims. They add nothing to its peace, its prosperity or its happiness, conserve nothing, build up nothing, but hurt and destroy everywhere. Alas for us! there is no help in man. But God will yet come to our succor. It cannot be that the direful rule of wicked or incompetent men is to go on for ever.'

"The judge was annoyed, and answered a little

roughly. But I forgive him, for I know how apt I am to speak strongly when I talk on this subject. I came away from the interview depressed and heartsick. I had hoped to find the judge ready to do all in his power to break up the sale of liquor on Sunday, the day of all others in the week when men and half-grown boys are idle and easily led into temptation. But on his showing, it does not lie with him; and if it did, I'm afraid he would not have the courage to grapple with the evil."

There was a troubled expression on the three women's faces as they sat and talked together, and a hopeless feeling at their hearts. Sister Green had a son just entering upon manhood. He had been the child of her prayers ever since his sweet baby eyes opened to the light. She had nurtured him in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She had, so far as will and thought on her part could go, consecrated him to her divine Saviour, praying that he might be led to him and filled with his saving Spirit.

Wesley Green, up to his eighteenth year, had been a quiet, obedient boy, readily yielding to the will of his mother, whose character was stronger than that of his father. But as he drew near the

age of manhood and mingled with those older than himself, he began to rebel against a rule to which he had submitted so long and with such a gentle acquiescence. His love of companionship, naturally strong, but held in check by his mother's fear of bad influences, now became active; and when questioned too closely about those with whom he associated, he sometimes showed a degree of irritability that caused great concern at home.

It had been the dear desire of Mrs. Green's heart to see her son a preacher of righteousness. For this she had prayed in her closet every day from the years of his tender childhood upward until the downy beard began to touch with soft shadows his lip and cheeks. But with a deeper and intenser fervor and with a profounder solicitude had she prayed for his conversion—for that change of heart which she believed could only be given in answer to the prayer of faith, and without which her boy would remain an alien from God and be lost for ever if he died.

Faithfully had Mrs. Green done her duty by her son. With care and diligence from the very beginning had she tried to store up in his mind precious truths from the Bible, reading to him its

sacred narratives, its plainer precepts and its beautiful parables, and this with continued repetitions, until his memory was filled with the letter in which dwelt a divine life and power. And she taught him lessons of faith and trust in God, of good-will and service to others, of pity and tenderness and mercy.

It was the saddest trial of Mrs. Green's life, her bitterest disappointment, when, after sixteen or seventeen years of prayers and tears and long wrestlings with God for the conversion of her boy, she found him impenitent and almost indifferent to the things of religion. The world had greater charms than the Church; but to see him go out into the world and partake of its spirit, to be subject to its allurements and assailed by its temptations, to drift far off from her upon its deceitful waters, and all the while be alien to God and under his displeasure, unconverted, and therefore in hourly danger of losing his soul,—ah! here was a sorrow that went down to the very life-springs of this mother in Israel, and made them bitter as Marah's waters.

Wesley's preference was for business, not for theology, and with heavy forebodings his mother saw

him enter a store on Main street the owner of which was an irreligious man named Donald Frank. If the young man could have seen her in her closet, alone with God, on the morning of that day, and could have heard her prayers for him, the memory of her upturned, tearful, pleading face and the tender eloquence of her petitions could hardly have failed to become as a talisman, warning him at the approach of danger no matter how false the guise, and holding him back in the presence of evil enticement.

Up to this time Wesley Green's intimacies were not with the worldly-minded young men of Delhi. His associations had been almost entirely limited to the young people belonging to the Methodist church, and he had been taught to believe that outside of these limitations lay a wilderness of danger. Now his feet began to stray into this wilderness, and he found it a pleasant land. The young men he met were exceedingly agreeable, and their ways pleased him. There was a freedom to which he had been a stranger and a levity that, instead of shocking, amused him. The jestings about sacred things and the stories making light of religion which were often told in his hearing grated for a time on his

feelings. But this sensitiveness gradually wore off, and he could enjoy these stories with as keen a pleasure as the rest. Gradually but steadily Wesley Green lost his interest in religion, and became as much absorbed in worldly pleasures as any of his new associates.

This change the mother saw with a sorrowful heart. Without the safeguard of prayer and faith and trust in God, she knew that her boy was in great danger. In a town like Delhi most of the young men belonging to what are called the best people of the place—that is, the wealthy, educated and more intelligent—are thrown together, and form intimacies. Among these are always a few leading spirits; and if they, as is frequently the case, are self-indulgent young men and inclined to vicious habits, their influence upon the rest is fraught with great evil. The tavern is too often the resort of these young men. You will see them lounging about its doors through the day or congregating in its bar-room at night. They are gay, good fellows, very social and free, and draw weaker young men after them as easily as a ship draws a pinnace.

All this the anxious mother knew, and she had a perpetual heartache as she saw day by day some

fresh evidence of her boy's absorption into the new social life with which he had come in contact. A week after the entrance of Wesley Green into Mr. Frank's store, Jimmy Hanlan opened his attractive saloon. It was diagonally across from the store, which occupied one of the corners made by the intersection of Elm and Main streets. The opening of this saloon had been quite an event, and every one on the street was talking about it. The first day, Jimmy, who, with all his coarseness, understood human nature, especially on its weak side, kept open house, dispensing free liquor all day and free lunches at least four times. Most of the storekeepers on Main and Elm streets, where the chief business of the town was carried on, and most of their clerks also, complimented Jimmy Hanlan with a call, drank his free whisky and beer and ate of his savory lunches, some of them repeating the visitation more than once, and two three who usually kept their heads clear going home at night visibly the worse for Hanlan's new enterprise.

Up to this time Wesley Green had never tasted liquor at any bar in Delhi. But led by curiosity to see the handsome fittings up of the "Hanlan House," the praise of which was on almost every

tongue, he went with one of his fellow-clerks to see the show. He found a dozen young men in the bar, many of whom he knew, eating, drinking and enjoying themselves. Jimmy was at his counter, radiant and affable. He had risen suddenly into a man of importance. The common porter whom a little while before no one cared to notice found himself grasped cordially by the hand by lawyers, judges, merchants and doctors, all of whom drank his liquor and praised his elegant establishment, prophesying success to his new and liberal-minded enterprise.

Wesley did not mean to taste Hanlan's liquor, but he tasted it, nevertheless. The enticement was too strong. He felt uncomfortable about it, and at dinner-time kept from going too near his mother, lest some odor of the beer he had taken might linger on his breath and betray him.

It is not our purpose to follow this young man along the dangerous path into which his feet diverged that morning. We only show the easy and natural way in which the first step was taken. Scarcely a year had passed before his mother had deeper cause for sorrow, and it was not simply her anxiety for the common good that inspired her visit

to Judge Isett and drew from her that strong appeal for legal interference in the sale of liquor on Sunday. The inspiring motive lay nearer her aching heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ten years that followed the opening of Jimmy Hanlan's new drinking house was marked by many changes, some of which we shall now describe as briefly as possible. Delhi is a representative American town, and what we are about to tell in regard to Delhi might be told of hundreds—nay, thousands—of our towns and cities.

Ah! if the people, with whom all power and all reforms rest, would only take the lesson to heart! From the day this saloon, so much more attractive and "respectable" than any before seen in Delhi, opened its doors and threw out its invitations, changes scarcely observed at first, but gradually progressing, began to appear. There had been two or three reading clubs made up of young ladies and young gentlemen who met every week. But it was not long before one and another of the young men began to drop out, and within little more than a year all were broken up. Many of these young men you would find at the "Hanlan House" if you happened

to call in there during the evening to meet a friend. It was a notable place for meeting one's friends—a kind of social exchange for Delhi. If these young men were not in the bar, you would be very apt to find them in one of Jimmy's snug little rooms up stairs, out of the way of common observation. They might be drinking socially, or playing at cards, or eating one of the nice suppers Jimmy knew so well how to provide. Reading clubs were tame affairs to the meetings at Hanlan's.

A debating society had flourished for some years in Delhi. Law students and other young men who sought to improve themselves met twice a month in the town-hall, and their mothers and sisters and sweethearts came regularly to hear their discussions, and to enjoy the intellectual recreation to be found there. This debating society was one of the attractive institutions of the place. But soon after the new saloon was opened a blight fell upon it. One after another of the smartest young men lost interest in the meetings and stayed away. If you sought for them, you would be very sure to find them at Jimmy Hanlan's. The less gifted members of the society failed to bring out the usual audiences, and naturally the debating society,

which had been so large a source of improvement and pleasure, languished.

At the end of the first year, Hanlan, who was a wide-awake, progressive young fellow, added a new attraction to his establishment in the shape of a billiard-table. Two rooms in the second story of his house were made into one, and fitted up as a billiard saloon. This was a *coup de grace* to the reading clubs and debating society; from that time they were things of the past.

The success of Hanlan stimulated all the other saloon-keepers, and caused them to offer increased attractions to the public. Old, dingy places were brightened up; showy fronts, red curtains and red lights began to multiply with singular rapidity. New saloons were opened, and within an incredibly short time the number was doubled. Up to the time of Hanlan's enterprising movement in Delhi there was not a single billiard saloon in the place, and but two bagatelle-tables. The men who sold liquor were dull, plodding fellows, satisfied with what came to them over the counter in a natural way, and not therefore inclined to new expedients and new attractions in order to draw custom. But the sharp young rumseller was giving the fraternity

some new lessons, and they were not slow to profit by them. There were no less than ten bagatelle-boards in the town at the close of the first year, and within two years the number rose to fifteen. Four billiard-tables were by that time in full blast, and daily and nightly patronized by young men, a large number of whom were too weak to stand up against the demoralizing influences that pervade the atmosphere of a billiard room. And against all this no remonstrance was raised by the people at large. Quietly they saw it go on, and quietly they submitted. A few temperance men and a few anxious wives and mothers deplored this new state of affairs and lifted their voices in warning, but they might as well have talked to the wind.

You cannot multiply bars and drinking saloons without a corresponding increase in vice, crime and immorality. The more attractive and "respectable" you make them, the more certain you are to corrupt, deprave and destroy the best and most promising young men in a town. This is the operation of a natural law that always works with unerring certainty—the law of cause and effect. Every human act has in it the vitality of a cause. It is a seed thrown into the rich soil of common

society, and will surely produce fruit after its kind—good, if good; evil, if evil.

Delhi could not escape the action of a law that never fails. The effect of this broadcast sowing of the worst seed it is possible to scatter in a community—the worst because it not only brings forth sorrow and death, but so poisons the soil that scarcely any good seed can take root therein—was not apparent merely in the dying out of reading clubs and literary associations. These were but negative effects. The positive were multiplied far beyond these, and of a sadder character. Scarcely a year and a half had gone by since a new impulse was given to the drinking trade by Jimmy Hanlan, ere in hundreds of hearts where peace had rested, anxiety, fear and sorrowful forebodings now found a dwelling-place. Mothers were in alarm for their sons, wives for their husbands and sisters for their brothers. You began to hear expressions of regret. This promising young man was throwing himself away, and that storekeeper was neglecting his business and spending half of his time at the "Hanlan House." Mr. A—— was seen staggering home late at night, and Lawyer G—— was so drunk on one occasion in court that the judge had to rebuke him,

when he became insolent, and was only quieted by threat of imprisonment for contempt. Young men who had always been seen at church on Sundays came no longer, and many wives who had for years walked with their husbands, Sabbath after Sabbath, to the house of God, went now, with sober faces and drooping heads, alone. Among these were the two ladies already introduced to the reader—Mrs. Sterling and Mrs. Gordon. It was the husband of the latter who had received the judge's rebuke.

Not alone among the more refined and cultivated people in Delhi was seen the unhappy consequences of this newly-stimulated and rapid growth of the liquor interest. Its grosser effects soon became apparent in an increase of open drunkenness and rowdyism in the lower stratum of society. Acts of violence were on the increase; cases of assault and battery, of wife-beating, of assault with intent to kill, of robbery and housebreaking, perpetrated by men who, a year or two before, were industrious laborers or mechanics; cases in which the interference of the court was asked to prevent husbands and fathers who had become intemperate from further waste of property and consequent beggary of their families; cases of crimes committed in

states of drunken frenzy,—were beginning to crowd the court calendar and absorb the attention of judges and jurors to a degree never before known in the county of which Delhi was the legal centre.

Taxes were on the increase. The old poorhouse, the rooms of which were never more than half full, had become overcrowded, and the county commissioners were obliged to levy a tax upon the people in order to build an addition. The cost of criminal prosecutions was becoming greater and greater every year, and the commitments for various offences, nearly all of which could be traced to intemperance, were now so large that the jail accommodations proved wholly insufficient. A new jail was decided upon by the commissioners, and proposals for plans and cost of construction were advertised to be sent in to the Board.

One of the worst aspects of the new order of things which had come as a legitimate consequence of the stimulated liquor traffic was the increase of idleness and vagabondism among the lower classes of young men, who made these drinking-places their nightly haunts and spent their time there in drinking, gambling, indecent talk and all that incited to blackguardism, vice and crime. Most of

these young men had family relations—they were sons, brothers and, some of them, husbands; and for every glass of liquor they drank, for every hour they wasted in vicious idleness, for every breach of the peace they committed in drunken excitement, and for every crime into which drink led them, some hearts besides their own suffered, and some lives were made sadder and drearier.

Every one of these saloons was a nursery of vice and crime. The viler ones, kept too often by men who had seen years of penal service in jails and State prisons, were especially hurtful, because they enticed from the ways of sobriety a class of uneducated young men in whom there had been little moral culture, and so removed them from the better influences that might have led to their becoming useful and honest men—a help to society and a blessing to their families.

But instead of this, the graduates of these hotbeds of vicious culture came forth as the pests and scourges of society. They became men of violence or plotters against the well-being of society, or wretched drunkards, the prison or the almshouse their destination.

The shadow that dropped so suddenly across the

sunny life of Mrs. Sterling never lifted itself. On returning from the house of Mrs. Gordon after the conversation held there with her friend and Mrs. Rhoda Green, her heart was heavy with a strange oppression. She seemed standing in the presence of some great disaster. The evil which for many months had been steadily but with silent and unseen steps drawing nearer and nearer had become all at once revealed at her very door, for now, with a suddenness that gave her a shock of pain, there stood before her the remembrance of many things which, seen in the new light this conversation afforded, had a most threatening aspect.

That a change had been steadily coming over her husband Mrs. Sterling had seen for several months, but the real cause of that change had never until now been imagined. Nothing could have been farther from her than the fear of his becoming a drunkard. But when this hideous fear thrust itself upon her, the anguish it occasioned seemed for a while more than she could bear.

When Mrs. Sterling met her husband that evening on his return from business, she hid from him the trouble that had come into her soul, but watched his every word and action with the closest

scrutiny. Things unheeded before were revelations now. The clear balance of his mind was gone, and there were little signs of weakness and a latent irritability that were altogether unlike her husband's real self. Could there be any cause for this but drink? It was a plain, hard, humiliating question. But Mrs. Sterling put it to her heart, and found but one answer, and that was No! From this hour her new life of sorrow and dread and deep humiliation began.

"Stay home with me, Luke dear," she said, in her loving way, drawing her arm within that of her husband as he was preparing to go out after supper.

Luke Sterling kissed his wife tenderly, and then turned his head a little from her, so that she could not look directly into his face, as he answered:

"I won't be gone a great while, Polly. We've been very busy at the store, and there are several large accounts that must be ready by to-morrow. I tried to get at them to-day, but couldn't find the time."

He did not look back at his wife, but went out in a kind of nervous haste. As the door shut all the light faded from Mrs. Sterling's countenance.

Fear crept into her eyes. She sat down with a slow, weary air, and remained in statue-like stillness for a long time. A book that she had been reading lay upon the table, but its attractions were gone. After a while she went up stairs to the chamber where her two children were sleeping, and hovered for some time about their bed, now sitting and gazing into their sweet baby faces with eyes full of yearning and sadness, and now moving aimlessly about the room. Her spirit was deeply disturbed. After an hour she began to hearken toward the street, and to grow very still when the sound of distant feet was heard, sighing heavily when they drew near enough for her to know that they were not the feet of her beloved, for whom she waited now with a feeling of anxious concern until this night a stranger to her heart.

It was past ten o'clock when Luke Sterling came home. He entered with a snatch of song upon his lips. This was not unusual, for Luke was of a gay and cheerful temper, and often came in singing a merry air. He was a little louder than usual to-night, and a little more emphatic in the kiss and embrace with which he was wont to greet his wife.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting for me so long,

Polly," he said as he held her in his arms and breathed into her face his telltale breath, "but couldn't get through a minute before. Shall not be out so late again if I can help it. Bless me, Polly!" he added a moment afterward as he saw her face more clearly. "What's the matter? Are you sick?"

"I've not been feeling right all the evening," Mrs. Sterling replied.

"What's the matter?" asked her husband, with real concern.

She put her hands to her temples as she replied:

"My head is aching, and I feel nervous."

"I'll go right off for Doctor Sandford;" and Mr. Sterling made a movement toward the door. But his wife restrained him, saying that she would be better after a night's rest.

But sleep and rest were not the medicine for her sickness. The morning found her with a pale face and unsteady nerves, and without appetite for food. It was not possible for Mrs. Sterling to rally in this short time and brace herself for the new life that was before her. All night she had been awake, while her husband slept heavily by her side, and all night she had been haunted with fearful images

and dreadful forebodings. The future until now so full of beautiful promise—the future into which she had looked for years, seeing nothing but happiness—had suddenly become a desert waste to her eyes. It would take time for her to gather up her strength and walk forward again with steady steps.

Luke did not rise on that morning with his usual feeling of elasticity. He had gone to his store on the previous evening, but did not remain there for over half an hour. For the balance of the time until after ten o'clock he had been with friends at Hanlan's, and there had been more champagne drank than any of their heads could bear without considerable nervous remonstrance. In the case of Luke it was very decided. He felt, as the saying is, "all upset;" his hands were unsteady and his head dull and inclined to ache. The breakfast passed almost in silence—something very unusual in that pleasant home.

Here began the sorrowful "new departure" in the lives of Luke and Polly Sterling which brought them to that sad condition in which they were found by the reader at the opening of this story. For ten years had they walked the new way into which their feet then diverged, finding it drearier and harder,

rougher and more desolate, with every advancing step.

It took a long time for Mrs. Sterling to so fully comprehend her new condition and new duties as to be able to meet them in that spirit of self-sacrifice and faithful adhesion to the man she loved, in spite of his infirmities and his debasement, which she felt to be her duty. But after she had settled all the questions that presented themselves and set aside all outside influences that wisely or unwisely pressed themselves upon her, she met the destiny she could not avert, with the strength and patience and self-abnegation that is possible only in a loving woman.

By the end of another year the effect of drink began to show itself on Mr. Sterling. No one had ever seen him intoxicated, though all his friends saw and said that he was drinking too much. He still attended faithfully to his business, and was steadily accumulating property. The handsome house he had built just on the outskirt of the town, on an elevated site that overlooked a sweep of green meadow-land through which ran a beautiful stream of water, was still his pride, and he never seemed to tire in the work of ornament and improvement. No grounds were laid out with better taste, and with

a few exceptions it was the most attractive house in Delhi.

It was in this second year that Mr. Sterling made his last improvement, in the erection of a beautiful fountain in the midst of the lawn that sloped down to the street in front of his house. The next year he began to get troubled in his business. He made bad debts and indiscreet purchases, was tempted to speculate, and permitted himself to be drawn into the visionary schemes of men who generally manage to ruin themselves and all who trust them. He still continued to drink, though, conscious of his infirmity, he often made good resolutions and tried to break away from a habit that he saw was hurting him. But every day he must go past the "Hanlan House" a dozen times or more, and there was about this house an attraction so strange and irresistible that he could not set himself against it.

The fourth year saw Luke Sterling seriously embarrassed in his business, and compelled to raise money by mortgaging his house for two-thirds of its value. He had become, by this time, greatly changed in appearance. His face was puffy and red, his eyes were blood-shotten, and his voice no longer possessed the clear musical tones that used to

make it so pleasant, but struck your ears with a hoarse, hard rattle. Everybody saw whither he was going; everybody talked about and regretted it, and everybody pitied his wife and family. But Luke Sterling was such a good fellow; every one liked him, and every one drank with him. If, after a humiliating fall—and such falls came now, alas! too often—he made a resolution to stop drinking, not twenty-four hours would pass ere some acquaintance or business friend would, with a strange thoughtlessness, invite him to "take a glass of something," and such an invitation he rarely had the strength to refuse. There was no help for him anywhere outside of home. The moment he stepped beyond its safe boundary he was in the midst of temptation. He could not pass from his house to his store without going by at least ten drinking-saloons; and so sensitive had his unhealthy appetite become that he was not able to look upon one of these places without feeling a desire for drink. This desire, if left alone, he would often have kept under. But more than half the men in Delhi were suffering from a chronic thirst, and this always became excited on one friend meeting another. The "Good-morning" or "Good-afternoon" or "Good-evening, Mr.

A——," or "Mr. B——," was too often followed by, "Come; let's have something."

Such an invitation it was next to impossible for Sterling to decline. Appetite was always impelling him, and opportunity ever at hand. So friend and neighbor joined in the league with death and hell against him. Society made it next to impossible, now that appetite had become stronger than will, for a man like Sterling to hold back his feet from the road that leads to destruction. Internal force and outside pressure were both in the same direction, and both against him.

As Luke Sterling, Frank Gordon and a score or more besides of Delhi's best men were fast retracing the steps by which they had risen since early manhood to the rank of useful and prosperous citizenship, other men were gathering in, as they and hundreds like them scattered and wasted, a harvest of this world's goods. None of these men had greater thrift than Jimmy Hanlan. At the end of five years from the time he opened his saloon he was owner of the fastest and most valuable horses in the town. He wore a diamond pin worth at least two thousand dollars, the admiration or envy of all the fast young men, now, we are sorry

to say, including a large number of the sons of Delhi's wealthiest and most influential citizens. A massive gold chain decorated his flashy vest, and he might often be seen drawing forth his three-hundred-dollar gold watch, and displaying it with seeming unconsciousness to the eyes of his customers.

Jimmy Hanlan had come to be a man of consequence in Delhi, though every person of honor, taste and intelligence despised him in his heart. But Delhi could not accept his wife. Coarse, ignorant and vulgar, the social world, in which the women reigned supreme, ignored her entirely. She might wear her fine clothes and flashy jewels, and drive out in her elegant carriage, but there was a charmed circle into which she might not enter. She had tried to break this circle at more than one point, but had failed each time.

Mrs. Sterling, while Hanlan was in her husband's store, had been kind to his wife and helped her in many ways to make her little family comfortable. Since Jimmy had risen to a better condition in life, Mrs. Hanlan had changed her bearing toward Mrs. Sterling whenever she happened to meet her on the street, and assumed an air of friendly familiarity to which Mrs. Sterling always responded with a cold

politeness that hurt the pride of Mrs. Hanlan and awoke in her mind a feeling of angry resentment.

The mortgage on Mr. Sterling's house was held by Hanlan, the profits on whose business had increased so rapidly that he had now become a money-lender. This fact Mrs. Hanlan knew, and she also knew that her husband's old employer was on the road to ruin and moving along at a rapid speed. Mrs. Sterling's steady refusal to give her the social recognition to which she imagined her changed circumstances entitled her rankled in her heart. One day, in riding past Mrs. Sterling's beautiful home, she said to herself, with a feeling of evil pleasure,

"You're holding your head high, my lady, but it's coming down pretty soon." And as she said this it flashed across her mind that now she might have a signal triumph. She had always admired this lovely home and envied Mrs. Sterling its possession. Was not her husband even now more its owner than Luke Sterling? Why should he not be its full possessor? This thought sent the blood in a hot current along her veins. A wild pleasure burned in her heart.

"Jimmy," she said, on meeting her husband that

evening, "how much does Luke Sterling owe you on his house?"

"Ten thousand dollars," replied Hanlan.

"All it's worth?" remarked his wife.

"No; it's worth fifteen thousand. The house cost him over ten thousand to build, and he's spent a good deal on the grounds every year. It's one of the handsomest places in Delhi, and worth every cent of fifteen thousand dollars. So I'm safe enough."

Mrs. Hanlan sat for a little while turning something over in her thoughts.

"When is Gordon's place to be sold?" she asked.

"Next Monday."

"How high are you going to bid?"

"As high as ten thousand dollars. Gordon has neglected it in the last two years, and it's very much out of repair."

"Dreadfully," replied his wife. "It will cost a thousand or two more to make it fit to live in."

"Yes, I suppose it will."

"That will make twelve thousand."

"Yes."

"It isn't worth it. And the fact is, Jimmy, I've changed my mind about Gordon's house. There'll

be another up for sale before long that I like a great deal better."

"Whose house?"

"Luke Sterling's."

Hanlan gave a little start of surprise:

"How do you know?"

"I've got eyes. Sterling is going to the dogs about as fast as ever I saw a man."

"Too true, I'm sorry to say," answered Hanlan, a shade of regret in his voice. "He wants me to let him have two thousand dollars more on the house. You see his business is running down, and he's getting cramped more and more every day."

"You're not going to do it?"

"I thought I would. It will be safe enough."

"Don't."

"Why not?"

"What's the use of making two or three bites at a cherry? If it was in my hands, I'd make short work of it. The fact is they've no business to be living in a place like that, head over heels in debt as they are. It's got to go into the hands of people that know better how to take care of money, and right soon too. Now, I want that house, Jimmy. I've set my heart on it, and don't mean

to have any other house in town. Mrs. Sterling has snubbed me and put on airs long enough. My turn is coming now. The wheel goes up and the wheel goes down, you know. I'm going up and she's going down."

It did not take Hanlan long to come over to his wife's view of the case. Until this moment he had never thought of getting possession of his old employer's handsome residence. He had loaned him money upon it as a safe investment of funds, and would have loaned him two thousand dollars more but for this new view of the case. Jimmy's wife was a strong-willed woman, and whenever she set herself to do a thing generally got her own way. And now her heart was set on being the possessor of Mrs. Sterling's beautiful home and seeing that lady step down as she stepped up. Her whole being thrilled with pleasure as she pictured to herself her own triumph and Mrs. Sterling's humiliation. Pity died out of her heart. It was her day now, and she meant to carry herself proudly.

CHAPTER V.

ON the next day Luke returned home an hour before dinner-time with a look of trouble on his face, and, what was unusual, he had not been drinking. His wife saw that something was wrong the moment he entered. In all these years of sad declension she had never spoken a harsh word, and he had been kind and gentle in his manner toward her. Mrs. Sterling had schooled herself to meet him always with as cheerful a countenance as it was possible to assume, both love and duty prompting her to do everything in her power to make home a place to attract and not repel.

It was nearly five years since the baleful shadow of Jimmy Hanlan's new saloon had thrown itself across her sunny way. If we could pause to write her heart's history for these years, every page of the record would be marked with tear-stains; it would fill twice the space of this volume, and make one of the saddest unfoldings of a woman's life-experience it is possible to give. No, we mistake; not one

of the saddest. The five years that followed took her feet down into deeper waters of sorrow and humiliation, and the night that closed around her was blacker than before.

"Are you sick, Luke?" Mrs. Sterling asked as her husband came in and she saw his changed and troubled face.

"Yes," he replied, "sick at heart."

"What is it, Luke? Tell me," she said, laying her hand upon him and looking into his face with tender anxiety.

"I'm in trouble, Polly," he answered—"in great trouble; and I don't know which way to turn. Everything is going wrong."

"What kind of trouble, Luke? Explain it all to me," said Mrs. Sterling, with such a calmness in her voice and manner that it seemed to put heart into the poor man, now looking so broken and wretched.

"Well, you see, Polly," Mr. Sterling replied, "everything, as you know, has been going wrong. Business gets worse and worse instead of better. I tried to raise two thousand dollars more on our house, and Hanlan promised me yesterday that I should have it. But to-day he refuses point blank;

and unless I get that much money, I shall have to ask an extension on paper that falls due this week. Then my credit will be gone."

"But can't you get the money somewhere else?" asked Mrs. Sterling.

"Hanlan holds a first mortgage of ten thousand dollars," was replied, "and no one will lend on the property with so large an encumbrance in the way. I tried two or three persons this morning; but when they learned of Hanlan's mortgage, they said no at once. It's hopeless. I'm tied hand and foot, and cannot move a step."

After a brief pause, Mr. Sterling continued: "I'm disappointed in Jimmy Hanlan. He's always been friendly, and always ready to do me a favor until now. He seemed never to forget that I had always treated him kindly and helped and encouraged him when he started in the world for himself. Yesterday he was just as friendly as ever, and almost as good as promised me the money; but when I saw him this morning, he was entirely changed. The fact is, Polly, he made me feel afraid of him. I saw something like an evil beast looking out of his eyes."

Mr. Sterling paused again. His wife saw that

something unspoken lay upon his mind, and waited for him to go on.

"He's a worse man than I thought him."

"No man in his trade can be a good man, Luke. That is impossible," said Mrs. Sterling.

"I'm afraid you are right, Polly—afraid you are right. It isn't a good trade, by any means. Ah me! It was a dark day for some in Delhi when Jimmy Hanlan turned saloon-keeper."

Mr. Sterling's voice trembled perceptibly and was much depressed in tone.

"Polly dear," the unhappy man went on, trying to speak more steadily, "I'm afraid we shall have to leave here."

He turned his eyes from his wife's face. He could not bear to witness the shock of pain that must sweep over it. There was no reply. Luke's eyes were on the floor, and he could not perceive the effect of his communication.

"If it were not for you and the children, Polly, I wouldn't care so much," he added, after a few moments, still not lifting his eyes.

"Our happiness, Luke, doesn't depend on keeping this house." Mrs. Sterling spoke with a calmness that surprised her husband, and with a sweet

patience that touched his heart and filled his eyes with tears. "Indeed, as things are, I would rather give it up and go into a smaller one. We can't afford to live here now."

Luke took both of his wife's hands and raised them to his lips. They were damp with tears and kisses when he let them free.

"Let us make a new start in life," Mrs. Sterling went on, with a tender earnestness of manner that filled the soul of her husband with an almost wild desire to retrieve all he had lost. "It is nothing to us what people may say or think, but it is everything to us what we are in ourselves. All this is not happiness;" and she glanced around the handsome room in which they were sitting. "We may possess these elegant things and be wretched, or we may live amidst the humblest surroundings and have peace in our hearts. Oh, Luke, I am ready for any change that will take these anxious cares from your heart and give me back my husband as I once knew him—my dear, good, noble husband."

She threw her arms about his neck and laid her head upon his breast, her frame shaking with sobs.

"You shall have your husband again, Polly dear," returned Luke, with answering sobs and

tears. "From this day I will lead a new life—I will be a man as of old, master of myself. I shall not be able to save this place. That grieves me most. Oh, it will be gall and wormwood to see you turned out and—and—"

He could not finish the sentence.

"And what, Luke? Don't be troubled about me; I could be happier in the humblest cottage with my dear, good husband all my own, and loving and caring for me as of old, than in a palace without such love and care. And what, Luke? What were you going to say?"

"Polly dear"—Sterling drew his lips together, while an indignant expression came into his face—"Hanlan has been looking with an evil eye upon our beautiful home. He wants it for himself and his vulgar wife."

Mrs. Sterling caught her breath and her face turned pale. But she was herself again in a moment, and replied:

"It will matter nothing to us who has it when it passes from our hands."

"It will matter a great deal to me," returned Sterling, with an angry flash in his eyes.

"We shall be so happy, Luke, that nothing like

this can possibly disturb our lives. Be all that you once were, and I shall care for nothing else. Let Hanlan have the place. Sell it, and get yourself free from embarrassment."

"God bless you, my dear wife!" ejaculated Sterling. "From this day I will be a new man for your sake. What is past cannot be helped, but I have all the future before me; I am yet in the prime of life, and by all that I hold dear I swear to recover, in the next five years, all that I have lost in the last."

Luke Sterling was deeply in earnest. The shock that came upon him when he discovered that Jimmy Hanlan wanted his handsome residence, and meant to have it by a foreclosure of the mortgage if he could get it in no other way, roused him to a bitter sense of the ruin to which drink and a consequent incapacity for business had brought him. He still loved his wife as much as his diminished capacity for loving would permit, and the thought of seeing her go out from her beautiful home and go down into one comparatively poor and humble, while the coarse saloon-keeper's wife, who had more than once done service as a menial in his house, passed up in her

vulgar triumph and took proud possession of all she had lost, almost maddened him.

All this was enough to arouse any man not wholly lost to a sense of his condition, and to stir the latent forces that might yet remain in his soul.

There was nothing either generous or just in the character of Hanlan. If there had once been, his new calling had driven it all out. He had learned that the best bargains are always made in dealing with the unfortunate, or with men in some ruinous strait. Sterling was now in pressing need of money—must have it, or run the risk of failing in business. It was impossible for him to raise anything more on his house unless Hanlan chose to make a further loan and take a new mortgage, which he could easily and safely do. But since that little talk with his wife, Hanlan had changed his views of the affair; and when Sterling called to get his answer about an additional loan of two thousand dollars, he met, instead of a compliant friend, as he had thought Hanlan, a hard and grasping absorber of whatever might come in his way.

"I've no more money to lend!" met the ex-

pectant merchant when he called that morning, spoken with a cold repulsion that chilled him.

"Oh, very well;" and Sterling was turning away hurt and surprised by Hanlan's unexpected rebuff.

"See here, Sterling!" called Hanlan, when his visitor had gone a few paces.

"Sterling!" The "Mr." was dropped now. There was a time when Jimmy Hanlan had said, "Y'r honor, sir." And the respectful "Mr." had never before this time been omitted when addressing his old employer.

The unhappy man turned and came back. He felt the intended disrespect, not to say insolence.

"Look here, my friend," said Hanlan, knitting his brows and shutting his coarse mouth. "I want to say a word to you."

"Say on," was returned.

"I shall want the money on that mortgage next week. I am going to buy a piece of property."

"What property?" asked Sterling, almost mechanically.

"That's my own affair," replied Hanlan, with offensive rudeness.

"You might at least be civil about it," said Sterling, stung by the man's insolence.

"Civil or not, I shall want that money next week. So make your arrangements to get it if you don't want trouble."

"But you know as well as I do that it is impossible for me to raise ten thousand dollars at a week's notice."

"That's your affair, not mine," was the gruff retort.

Luke Sterling, who saw now for the first time the unpitying wolf in this man's eyes, and felt that he had nothing to hope from him, turned away again, and was near the door when Hanlan called him back and said, with the air of a superior,

"If you'll take my advice, you'll sell your house instead of trying to borrow money on it and saddling yourself with more interest. You can't afford to live there, anyhow. Sell it and put the money into your business. Then you'll be doing the sensible thing."

"Thank you," returned Sterling, in a husky voice, while a deep pallor overspread his face.

"No thanks, my friend," said Hanlan, in a light, unfeeling tone. "If it does you any good, I shall be satisfied. Sell, and do the sensible thing. Un-

load while you can. That's my advice, and I won't charge you a cent for it, ha! ha!"

And he laughed coarsely.

"One word more," he called after Sterling, who made a third movement to retire. "Let me hear from you soon; and if you don't meet with a purchaser, give me your best terms, and perhaps I can find you one."

Luke Sterling understood him now. He made no response, but went out, dazed. Almost for the first time in five years he had been in the bar-room of the "Hanlan House" without calling for liquor. He was too stunned and bewildered for business, and so, after a feeble effort to look over his accounts and see if he could find in them anything on which to rest a hope of extrication from imminent peril, he went home, as we have seen.

All this, as has been said, was enough to arouse any man not wholly lost to a sense of his condition, and to stir the latent forces that might yet remain in his soul. And Luke Sterling was now thoroughly aroused. His first effort was to sell his house to some one into whose possession he would rather see it pass than into that of the saloon-keeper. But those who felt themselves able to live

in so handsome a house were already suited to their tastes. And, moreover, he was not the only well-to-do citizen of Delhi whose circumstances had changed in the last few years. His neighbor Gordon's house, almost as fine as his own, was up for sale, and so was the house of Judge Hanson. When the new saloon was opened, five years before, with its new attractions and fine éclat, Judge Hanson was known as a free liver and one who enjoyed his glass of wine. But no one had ever seen him the "worse for liquor," as it is said, and he was rarely to be found drinking in any public place. But the enticements of the "Hanlan House" had been too much for him. No sooner were its doors opened than there seemed to set toward it an almost irresistible current, drawing thitherward judges, lawyers, merchants, politicians and men of leisure. Good society was to be found there as well as good things to eat and drink. Men who did not care for liquor drifted there by the desire to meet friends and pass a pleasant, social evening.

And so Judge Hanson, the good liver and moderate drinker, found the temptations of this new saloon too great, and himself, at the end of five years, so much reduced in circumstances as to be

compelled to sell the house of his wife and children and gather them in sorrow and humiliation into an humbler abode. And a like thing happened with Frank Gordon, one of the best lawyers in the county, as well as with others who might be named.

Sterling could find no one who wanted to buy his house. After three days, during which time he wholly abstained from drink, he called upon Hanlan and offered to sell the property, fixing the price at sixteen thousand dollars. Jimmy scouted at this valuation as preposterous, and said that he would not give a dollar over twelve thousand for it, but finally advanced to twelve thousand five hundred, beyond which he would not go. As Sterling was in a strait and had made up his mind to sell, the bargain was finally closed at the last-named figures, and as soon afterward as it could possibly be done he moved into a small house.

While negotiations for this sale were in progress, Mrs. Hanlan, richly dressed and radiant with jewelry, came every day in her carriage to look over the house and through the grounds, assuming a vulgar dignity and a half-patronizing air toward Mrs. Sterling that, under other circumstances, might

have been amusing, but which, taking things as they were, hurt and humiliated the suffering woman.

It did not take long to make the change. A portion of the furniture was sold, and with the rest they fitted up a new and humbler home, in which for a brief period they were happier than they had been for years.

Ah! that we have to say, "for a brief period"! Mr. Sterling was deeply in earnest. He had solemnly resolved never to debase himself with drink. It had been his master and his curse, hurting and degrading him, and filling the heart of one he loved with deepest sorrow. "It shall be so no more," he had said, in the bitterness of his suffering and repentance. But like so many hundreds and thousands in like condition, he did not comprehend the absolute necessity of denying to his vitiated appetite the stimulant that is sure to arouse it into an uncontrollable desire. He meant to be a self-poised man again, and to hold his appetite, as in earlier years, under absolute control. The lesson he had received was enough, he thought. His humble home, his patient, cheerful and now happy wife, his little children growing up around him, the new aspect his business was assuming under the

new and more intelligent devotion he gave to it, were all so many aids and incentives to a new life.

For weeks, even months, Mr. Sterling kept his appetite under with bit and bridle. How happy they were at home! All his friends took heart again, and saw with pleasure the great change and new promise for a better life. But he was walking amid temptations of no ordinary character. He was surrounded by enemies who never slept, who were always plotting against him; and what made his condition the more perilous was the fact that he did not treat these enemies as if they were his deadly foes, but too often held friendly intercourse with them and left in their presence the doors of his citadel of strength unbarred.

Only for a short time did Luke Sterling wholly deny his appetite, and daily during that period did he receive invitations to drink from thoughtless friends and acquaintances. The arching eyebrows, the shade of surprise or the light, bantering sentences that were almost sure to meet him on declining these invitations annoyed him greatly. He regarded them as reflections on his manhood. He felt very strong, was sure of himself, knew that he could hold his appetite in check as completely

as he had been able to do before the days of his unhappy enslavement. His eyes were open now, and he knew the danger of over-indulgence. The sad lessons of the past five years were too deeply graven upon his heart and their memory too full of pain and humiliation to be forgotten. No, there was little danger of another fall; he could drink in moderation, be social with his friends, as before, instead of holding himself aloof, to be sneered at as a weakling who dared not trust himself.

So he began again to drink in moderation, but being on guard, held himself to certain prescribed limits. But it was not possible to keep for any length of time within any limits he might set for himself. He was indulging a fatal error. He could not drink or let it alone at will, as in his earlier manhood. Appetite and will were now at variance with each other, and appetite had become stronger than will. There was safety only in holding appetite bound. Give it the smallest liberty, and it would begin to gather up its strength in preparation for an early struggle to gain the mastery.

Only a few weeks went by ere Mr. Sterling's daily visits to the "Hanlan House" were resumed,

though his relations with the proprietor never again partook of their old friendly character. In less than three months he was drinking again almost as hard as before, and the hope which had for a little while so brightened the life of Mrs. Sterling, giving her poor surroundings a richer gilding than her costliest things had ever known, lying cold and almost lifeless in her heart.

CHAPTER VI.

THE five years that succeeded were full of sorrow, not for the wife of Luke Sterling alone, but for the wives and mothers of hundreds of men and boys in Delhi. Few homes in the town were free from the blight and curse of intemperance. No mother felt safe for her son, and few were the wives that did not tremble for their husbands, seeing, as they did, so many of the best men in the place falling one after another the victims of drink.

A second addition had been made to the poor-house, and the foundations of a new jail that was to cost the county over two hundred thousand dollars were being laid. This new jail was to have all the modern safeguards and sanitary arrangements known in the best prison architecture. The public-spirited men who had the business of its construction in hand determined that it should be a credit to the county and an ornament to the town. They exhibited the plans, all beautifully drawn out by

the architect, and expatiated with pride upon the admirable design they had adopted. If they had been engaged in the erection of a college building, they could not have shown greater pleasure in their work.

All the dreadful meaning of what they were doing seemed to be far away from these men; or if it forced itself at times upon their consideration, it never seemed to occur to them that it would be a far better and cheaper thing to stop the creation of criminals than to spend vast sums of money for prisons in which to confine them.

"These saloons are the curse of our town," you would hear on all sides. "Our young men are going to destruction." But no common cause was made against them. Every month or two the gate of a new road to destruction would be opened and crowds go pressing in, but the people of Delhi only sighed and submitted. There was found no man of strength and influence courageous enough to lift a standard and call for an army to set itself in battle array against an enemy that was ravaging the town, and with a devastation worse than fire and sword.

A handful of banditti held Delhi in its grasp, drew

from it a daily tribute of not less than one or two thousand dollars, and bound its young men and its men of strength in fetters more g lling than fetters of brass or iron, and with a strange, cowardly, humiliating indifference Delhi submitted to this accursed domination, and made no effort to throw it off.

Suffering and heart-breaking women, on whom the curse of this banditti rule fell heaviest, lifted their hands, imploring fathers and husbands and sons to rise in their strength and drive the plunderers from their midst, but their appeals fell heedless upon the air. Day by day they saw their beloved ones—the husbands who were dear to them as life, the boys they had nurtured and cared for and led up toward useful manhood, the boys they had watched over with the tenderest solicitude and held up to God in daily prayers—saw them drifting out upon a sea of fire, while they stood upon the shore powerless to save. No wonder they grew desperate sometimes. No wonder half a dozen women, roused to desperation, should on one memorable occasion break through the bounds of "propriety and social order," and commit a most dreadful and indecent outrage, at which all Delhi was shocked, going so

far as to enter the bar of a "quiet and respectable saloon-keeper" and turn his liquor into the street.

But for this great outrage their husbands and fathers had to pay dearly. Suit was brought against them for damages in three times the amount at which the destroyed beer and whisky was valued, and a jury of citizens on which the saloon-keeper's lawyer managed to get a goodly number of his friends gave a verdict against them.

"A wholesome lesson," remarked the editor of the Delhi *Eagle*, in commenting on the result of this trial, "and one that will teach these excitable females that there is such a thing as law and order in Delhi."

This Delhi *Eagle* was on all social questions exceedingly conservative. The mouthpiece of one of the political parties—it matters not which—it was especially conservative in regard to temperance. It believed in temperance in all things—temperance in eating as well as in drinking, temperance in speech and deportment, in morals and in religion. "You can't call a man temperate," said the *Eagle*, "who abstains from beer or whisky and makes a beast of himself at the table, or who gets up and makes an intemperate speech against men

engaged in a legal and legitimate calling. The women who committed the gross outrage at McCaffrey's saloon were as drunk in their way as any rowdying loafer on the street."

All the saloon-keepers were jubilant over the finding of the jury, and for a week after the publication day of the *Eagle*, the editor, who had so nobly stood up for law and order and the rights of the people as against fanatics and their projected outrages, could drink at any bar in Delhi free of cost. And well did they understand the value of a friend like the editor of the *Eagle*—a maker and controller of public sentiment. Had he taken the women's side, and even partially justified their conduct on the ground that the evils under which they were suffering were of such magnitude and dire malignity that they could no longer be endured, and that, despairing of any hope in legislation and law, they had risen against an enemy that was destroying their sons and brothers and husbands, and fought him in wild desperation with the only weapons they could command,—had the *Eagle* done this, the saloon-keepers of Delhi might have had a hard time of it, and Hugh McCaffrey not been the only one whose beer and whisky found a summary

transfer from the shelves inside to the gutter on the outside.

The editor of the *Eagle* knew the value of whisky and drinking saloons. They were valuable, almost indispensable, agencies in a political campaign. They made in every community a little army of idlers who were always ready for something that would pay them better than work, or, if not better, for a smaller outlay of time and effort. Then the taverns and drinking saloons formed the headquarters of politicians, and were the places where "slates" were made up and "rings" formed, and all the machinery forged and set in motion by which easy-going citizens were led to vote for this man or that, just as these "ring" politicians might determine. It will be seen from this why the editor of the *Eagle* was against the heart-breaking women, and advised them to stay at home and make things more comfortable there for their sons and husbands if they wished to keep them away from taverns.

And so the affair came to be laughed over as a good joke, McCaffrey declaring that his custom had doubled since the raid, and that he only wished the women would make him another call.

Year by year the wretched wives and mothers

of Delhi stood helpless while this terrible work went on. They saw their boys grow up toward manhood with fear and trembling, too often, alas! to join the fast-swelling numbers of the idle and dissolute. Fathers who clearly comprehended the situation, and had the nerve to act and the means to do what they saw best, sent their sons to some of the larger cities, as safer places than a country town of four or five thousand inhabitants, there to study for a profession or enter stores to learn the business of merchandising. But those who were not able to do this had to take the dangerous chances of bringing up their boys at home.

From his second fall Luke Sterling did not arise strong and in his right mind again. He made, it is true, in some of the sad crises that came as his feet went steadily down, down, from ease and comfort to want and painful destitution—nay, worse, to utter abandonment of himself to the vice of drinking—many efforts to recover himself. But they were only short-lived and feebler at each renewal of the struggle. Temptation met him, turn which way he would. Delhi had become a vast saloon the many doors of which stood open everywhere—in the broad and busy streets and in little alleys and

out-of-the-way places, to which boys and others wishing to avoid observation could go and get liquor.

Death came twice, during these five years, into the sorrowful home of Luke Sterling, and at one of these visits bore away his oldest daughter, who was just entering her fifteenth year. When the pale-faced mother bent down and kissed, in her coffin, the cold lips of her dead child, there were no tears in her eyes, but in her heart and on her lips, in silent utterance, was a fervent "Thank God!"

For what? That her beautiful and her beloved was with the angels and beyond the evil of this world, which lay with such a crushing weight upon her. Lovingly had this child stood by her mother, helping her amid her hard duties and sharing the griefs and pains with which drunkenness had burdened her life. But she was gone now, and the mother was in her sorrow and weakness alone—alone, yet in love thanking God.

Does the meaning of all this enter your heart, reader? Can you put yourself in that mother's place and understand something of the ordeal through which she had passed—something of the anguish of self-sacrificing love that wrung her heart

as she bowed over the coffin of this child, and said, "Thank God"? Can you do this in anything like a remote conception of the bitter truth, and not, from the moment of such a realization, set yourself, with all the influence you possess, against a traffic that brings to the innocent and the helpless such woe and desolation?

When death came a second time, the veiled angel lifted tenderly from the mother's wasted bosom a babe not six months old and bore it lovingly to heaven. The soft white garments that wrapped the waxen effigy the spirit had left behind and the little coffin that garnered up the precious clay were given in charity by pitying friends and neighbors; and among those who contributed for the purpose was Mrs. James Hanlan, who kindly sent her carriage to be used at the funeral. It may be said of her that long before this, wounded pride and vulgar animosity had died out of her feelings, so far as Mrs. Sterling was concerned, for the wretched drunkard's wife had fallen so low in the social scale that she was now an object of even this woman's commiseration.

Two children remained, George, who was sixteen years old at the time this story opened, and

Alice, in her tenth year. Sterling had kept on in his downward course until he was a useless cumberer of the ground, wholly dependent on the labor of his wife. Her only resource was her needle, and with this she fought for bread, how desperately her worn and wasted form too painfully told. A year before this time George had to be taken from school and put to work that he might earn something. The only place his mother could find for him was in a large machine-shop situated about a mile and a half from Delhi. It was too far away for him to live at home, and in consequence of this he had to board at Salter's, as the shops and village that had grown up around them were called. The owners of these shops, who had a large number of boys in their employment, boarded them as cheaply as possible, and without any care for the associations into which they might be thrown. A worse school for lads could hardly be found than were these shops and cheap boarding-places, and their bad influence upon George Sterling was soon apparent to the eyes of his mother. Thus a new and heavy weight of anxiety and fear was laid upon her heart.

Crushed and helpless, she was now almost in de-

spair; for as mothers will whose earthly supports have failed, and who feel themselves growing weaker and weaker every day, and less able to stand up in their life-battle, she had begun to look hopefully forward to the time when her boy should put on the strength of manhood and lovingly unclasp the heavy armor she had borne, and take the weapons of warfare from her weak and failing hands. Alas for this fond hope! Its uplifting wings were drooping already. In all these years of suffering and privation no one had ever heard Mrs. Sterling utter a word against her husband, and she had never upbraided him, nor met him on his coming home with sour or angry looks. It was not in her loving nature to be hard or harsh, and no change in her husband, unless it had been of a very different character from that which intemperance had wrought, bad as that was, could have turned her heart against him. She loved him for what he had been to her, for the better self she still believed in, though hidden out of sight, and for the resurrection of which she still hoped and prayed, but with a weaker faith and feebler utterance as the years went by and she saw him sink lower and lower. As for Sterling, it must be said of him that no degree of

intoxication ever made him rough or cross toward his wife, and few weeks went by that he did not deplore his condition and his slavery, and promise her that he would amend. But resolutions of amendment, no matter how sincerely made, had become as flax in the flame to him. The power of self-control under temptation was gone, and in Delhi temptation reached out its hands for men like him at every corner and in every street and alley, and made reform impossible. He could not leave his house and go for the distance of a single block and not be enticed. Without other help than his own enfeebled will, the case of Sterling was hopeless.

Faithful to all the needs of her husband so far as lay in her power, Mrs. Sterling continued now as at the beginning. If he were not in by nine or ten o'clock in the evening, she went in search of him and brought him home. Many were the coarse jests she had to encounter, and many the angry scowls and threatening words she received from saloon-keepers who did not like her visits. But nothing of this deterred her. Faithful to what she believed to be her duty, and faithful to the love that could not die, she went her almost nightly circuit

of the saloons; and when she found her husband, it was often noticed that her wan face brightened a little, and that her eyes had a look of pitying tenderness in them as they rested upon the one she sought.

Thus it was with Luke Sterling and his family at the end of ten years from the time Jimmy Hanlan opened his saloon. How it fared with many other families, happy and prosperous as this one, it would take volumes to tell, and the histories would be so sad and sorrowful that none would be able to read them without tears. Among the almost heart-broken mothers of Delhi was good Sister Rhoda Green, that saint in Israel whom all revered and loved. Her boy, whom in prayer she had consecrated to the service of God while yet an infant in his cradle, had gone far astray, consorting with the evil men who infested the town and crowded its many bar-rooms—horse-jockeys, gamblers, Sabbath-breakers and a miserable crew of pot-house politicians and adventurers. Tippling had grown upon him. His head was not very strong. In a few years he had lost control of himself, and was now going the drunkard's downward road.

Frank Gordon, the lawyer, was almost as far down as Luke Sterling, and his wife bowed and broken, though not bearing with the same loving patience the miseries of her lot.

A strong, true man in Delhi, and faithful to his high and sacred calling, was the Rev. Jason Wilder. He was tender as well as true and strong; and while he rebuked the evil-doer and denounced iniquities of all kind, often with a fiery indignation that stirred the hearts of his hearers like the sound of a trumpet calling to battle, his ministrations to the penitent, the sick, the sorrowing and the bereaved were so sweet and gentle and full of true Christian sympathy that all who knew him in his offices of teacher, comforter and friend esteemed and loved him.

He, too, was a sufferer from the curse which lay upon their town. The son of his hopes and prayers had been hurt by the same poisoned arrow that was striking down and destroying the best and most promising young men of the place; and only a month before this time the tearful face of this son's wife—the bride of a year—had been laid in agony upon his bosom, and he could offer her no comfort—could only pray in broken sentences, as he

drew her tightly to his heart, that God would temper the wind to his shorn lamb.

And for all this the stream of cursing flowed on, full to its parched and desolate margins. A few men without pity and without conscience, having the fear neither of man nor God before their eyes, held the town in their hands and subsidized it to their interests, caring not who or what was lost, so that they made gain of the people. From the costliest dwelling down to the meanest hovel in the town women's hearts were breaking. The poor had greater suffering than the rich, for they came in closer and harder contact with coarse and brutal men too often transformed by drinking into cruel fiends. With none to pity and none to help, they drank the cup of bitterness to the very dregs. Not alone did they suffer from hunger and cold, from sorrow and shame, from want and disease. The curse of drink lay heavier than this upon too many of these unhappy women. Personal violence was added. Wives were beaten or knocked down by fists or cut with knives, maimed often for life. Little children were terribly abused, and even tender babes cruelly hurt in their mothers' arms.

Thus it was in Delhi at the time our story

opened, and there was not a man of controlling influence in the place who had any serious thought of attempting a radical change in the state of affairs, or who believed it possible to free the town from the curse of drink.

CHAPTER VII.

AND now we take up the thread of the story, dropped at the close of the first chapter.

As Mrs. Sterling passed into the street the wind struck her in the face, taking away her breath, but she quickly recovered herself, and drawing her thin cloak about her, went forward with rapid steps almost in the teeth of the sleety rain that was still falling heavily. A few minutes' walk brought her to a saloon that was one of the resorts of her husband. Quietly pushing open the door, she stepped inside, and stood for a moment looking around the bar-room. Not seeing the object of her search, she retired without speaking.

"What's the matter?" asked a man, addressing the saloon-keeper, who stood leaning against the bar talking with a customer. "You looked scared when Luke Sterling's wife came in."

"Did I? Well, I had a sort of nervous shock when I saw her petticoats drive in through the

door. I thought it might be one of the praying women I was reading about to-day."

"Ho! ho! that is rich!" ejaculated the other, much amused. "You don't expect to have them here, do you?"

"What's to hinder? The thing is spreading like fire in a prairie, and a spark is as likely to fall upon Delhi as anywhere else."

"That's so. Well, suppose it breaks out here; what are you going to do about it?"

"Can't say. But I'm afraid I shall be like Davy Crockett's squirrel when the old hunter raised his rifle."

"How was that?"

"He cried out, 'There, there, colonel! don't fire! I'll come down!'"

"The white feather, ha! Well, I wouldn't have believed that of you, Mark Schroder. I thought there was a deal more grit in you."

"I'm gritty enough in a fair fight and with men," replied Schroder, as he was called, "but I can't fight with women."

"Pshaw! If a woman tried to knock you in the head, wouldn't you defend yourself?"

"Yes."

"Very well."

"But I wouldn't take a stand-up fight with a woman, no how. I'd run first."

At this a loud laugh went through the bar-room.

"No fear for Delhi," remarked one. "The women here are not of that sort—have too much respect for themselves. Isn't that so, Wesley?"

The person thus addressed was a young man who, with three others, was sitting at a table playing cards. He had been listening to the conversation which had grown out of Mrs. Sterling's visit.

"I don't know what you mean by too respectable," he replied, drawing himself up. He had been drinking rather freely. "But I can tell you one thing: respectable or not respectable, there's one woman in this town who knows how to pray and who isn't afraid. She's used to it and can't be beat; though," he added, in a lower voice, "her praying doesn't seem to have done much good in one case."

"In yours, you mean?" said the saloon-keeper.

"Yes, in mine. Look at me!" and he spread out his hands and drew himself back. "I've been prayed over since I was a baby, and you see how much good it's done."

"And all this praying they talk about will do about as much good as it has done in your own case," said the man who had been talking with the saloon-keeper. His name was Squire. He was low-browed and had coarse features. These, with his heavy under jaw, marked him as a man of brutal instincts.

One word brought on another, and a great deal was said about praying women and religious people in general, which Wesley Green, whose head was not very clear, felt called upon to resent.

"My mother's a praying woman, and I won't stand that kind of talk," he exclaimed as some sharp philippic brought out a roar of laughter.

"Yes," said Squire, in a cold, sneering voice, "I've heard something about your mother's power in prayer. It's said that she can pray a man to hell and back again. She tried it on you, it seems—got you into hell; but I don't see that she's made much headway in getting you out. If I had a chance to put a word in her ear, I'd suggest that she tried a few prayers on the devil. You're over into his kingdom now; and unless she makes friends with his sooty highness, I'm afraid it's all over with you."

A loud guffaw from most of the bar-room loungers greeted this profane sally. Stung by what he felt to be an insult to his mother, Green started to his feet, and catching up the chair on which he had been sitting, swung it into the air and held it over the head of Squire in a threatening manner, denouncing him at the same time in the most offensive terms he could use.

Though Squire knew that Green's menacing attitude was only a feint, and that he had not the nerve to strike, he chose to act as though driven to self-defence, and struck the young man a heavy blow on one of his temples, knocking him senseless to the floor.

From the saloon of Mark Schroder, Mrs. Sterling crossed the street diagonally, splashing through the water that was filling the gutters almost to the tops of the curbstones. For a few moments she paused in front of a tavern that made but little show of lights and signs. In the door was inserted a piece of ground glass ten inches long and about five inches broad, and in the centre of this, in colored letters, were the words, "The Decker House." Just below this another and narrower piece of glass had been set in the door, and on this, in different-colored

letters were the words, "Ben Decker." The place had an ill look, and one had a feeling as he stood before it that something more and worse, if possible, than the trade of drinking was carried on inside.

Pushing open the door, Mrs. Sterling went in. There were only two or three persons in the bar-room, and everything was very quiet.

An oath, flung out with angry impatience, greeted her entrance. It came from a little man who sat near the stove, leaning back in a chair with his feet upon a table. He had small, deeply-sunken eyes and a heavy growth of dark grizzly hair. His face was disfigured by small-pox, and had more the expression of a cruel animal than that of a man.

"Go! go!" he said, flinging out one of his hands with nervous quickness. "Off with you, and don't let me see your face here again."

Mrs. Sterling remained long enough to make sure that her husband was not there, and then went away, her ears stunned by curses and threats.

"Ha! ha! It's as good as a play," exclaimed one of the men who were lounging in the saloon. "Curtain rises about half-past nine every night, doesn't it, Ben?"

This was met by a fresh burst of indecent profanity.

"It's one of the things I'd not stand," growled another inmate of the bar-room. "When I kept tavern over at Peterboro', I made short work with the old soakers—never 'lowed 'em to get a footin' in my ranche, sneakin' in without a red to save their souls, and waitin' for somebody to ask 'em to take a horn. It hurts a respectable place, it does. No decent feller wants to have a loafer sidlin' up to him when he's gettin' a comfortable drink, and lookin' like a dyin' calf. It's a nuisance. I wouldn't patronize a place where such things are allowed; and if you'll take a friend's advice, Ben Decker, you'll pitch that cuss of a Sterling into the street the very next time he puts his nose in here."

"Just what I'm going to do," answered the man to whom this was addressed.

As he spoke the door was pushed open, and a poor wretch, drenched with rain and shivering from cold, came shuffling into the bar-room.

"There's the miserable cuss now!" exclaimed the man who had just given his advice as to the treatment "old soakers" should receive.

At this, Ben Decker, his face aflame with sudden passion, started up, and striding across the room, confronted the individual who had just entered.

"Clear out!" he cried, angrily.

But Sterling—for it was that poor fallen man—was used to treatment like this, and did not mind it. It was one of the unpleasant incidents of the wretched life he now led—one of the many lions that were perpetually starting up in his way, and which must be passed. He did not "clear out," but stood his ground, and commenced fumbling in his pockets as if searching for money.

"Did you hear?" exclaimed Decker. There was the growl of a beast in his tones, but Sterling was too much stupefied by drink to heed this warning. He made an attempt to pass the infuriated saloon-keeper, who, seeing the movement, grasped him by the shoulder and pushed him back to the door through which he had just entered. Sterling struggled feebly, but he was little more than a child in the other's hands. Out through the door he was thrust; and as Decker gave him a kick that threw him half across the pavement, causing him to fall with his head striking the curb-stone, he cried out fiercely,

"If you show yourself inside of my place again, I'll wring your cursed neck off."

"That's the ticket!" exclaimed the man who had incited Decker to the commission of this outrage. "That's the way I used to serve 'em, and it did the business. The loafers soon got to know my ways and kept clear of me, ha! ha! If he comes back to-morrow night, repeat the dose. You can stand it as long as he can, I guess. It's bound to cure in the end."

Liquor was then called for, and the company drank all around, and had a good jolly time over this little episode in bar-room life.

Mrs. Sterling's next visit was to the "Hanlan House," at the corner of Elm and Main streets, the great gas-lamp of which, gorgeous with many colors, was conspicuous above all its rivals. Mrs. Sterling always shrunk with a painful sense of humiliation from entering this saloon, but her husband often went there at night; and not having found him at the taverns already visited, she turned her feet toward Hanlan's as the next place at which she would be most likely to find him. Hanlan did not relish these visits. Her presence among his customers, who were still largely made up of the better class

of people in Delhi, was an unpleasant intrusion, and had the effect of throwing a shadow upon their feelings, for many of them had known Mrs. Sterling, and even enjoyed her own and husband's generous hospitality, in other and better days.

"Can't you keep that woman away from here, Hanlan?" a judge of the county court had said to him only a few nights before. "It's like throwing a dash of cold water over me. Ugh! it makes one feel bad for a week afterward. If I'm to run the risk of meeting an apparition like that every night, I shall stay at home." And another gentleman, one of Jimmy's best customers, had remarked, not long before:

"It's a cursed shame to have that woman coming here. Why don't you stop it?"

And from others of his regular visitors the saloon-keeper had remonstrances of a similar kind. It was not agreeable to have their pleasant evenings disturbed after that fashion. The white, worn face of Mrs. Sterling, her deep-sunken and mournful eyes, her. poor thin garments and slender, wasted frame, standing out, as they did, sharply framed by the contrasting comforts and bright surroundings of Hanlan's saloon, made a picture

in every mind that saw her as distinct as if painted by the pencil of the sun—a picture from which they could not turn their mental vision.

Hanlan had tried to keep Sterling away, and had often threatened to eject him with violence if he dared to show himself inside of the bar-room, but Sterling was a quiet man, and gave no offence sufficient to warrant a measure of this kind. Jimmy kept a public-house, and he had as much right as any other man to go in and come out at will if he conducted himself in an orderly manner. Here it was that he oftenest received invitations to drink from old friends who knew that, with his all-absorbing thirst, he rarely had the means of gratifying it to any extent, and who, pitying him, helped him to the one only enjoyment of his life.

Almost daily, therefore, did Sterling visit Jimmy's saloon, undeterred by cold looks, scowls or rebuffs, and few nights passed that he did not drop in. He was usually restless during the early part of the evening, going from tavern to tavern and getting all the liquor he could obtain. By nine or ten o'clock he was generally in a half-drunken state, and would fall asleep wherever he happened to be, and remain in that condition until

his wife found him and took him home. Sometimes unfeeling practical jokes would be played off upon him, and sometimes an impatient saloon-keeper would rouse him up and start him off, using both kicks and curses if he made any resistance. It not unfrequently happened that his wife would come upon him wandering about the streets, too much bewildered to find his way home; and once she discovered him sitting in a chair, on the pavement in front of a tavern, fast asleep in a drenching rain. The heartless proprietor and his bar-keeper had placed him there, and thought it a capital joke.

As Mrs. Sterling entered Hanlan's saloon a stout boy, in the working-dress of a mechanic, who was sitting at a table with another lad about his own age playing at dominoes, turned suddenly pale and dropped his face out of sight.

"Good Heavens! there's that woman again," Jimmy heard one of his best customers, a prominent lawyer and politician, exclaim; and turning quickly, he saw the drenched figure of Mrs. Sterling near the door through which she had just entered.

An oath too profane and indecent to sully our

pages fell from Hanlan's lips. Turning quickly, he strode across the room, and confronting Mrs. Sterling, said, with rising passion,

"There's been enough of this cursed business, and it must stop! I've told you over and over again not to come here. Take yourself off at once."

Hanlan pointed with an imperative gesture to the door, but all this made no more impression on Mrs. Sterling than the sighing of a summer wind. Her pale face neither flushed nor changed its expression. She merely stepped past him and advanced a few steps farther into the room, her eyes turning quickly from side to side, searching for her husband.

To baffle a man in anger is generally to throw him into a blind rage, and the lower and more brutal his instincts, the more indecent and savage will his rage make him. The quiet, irresponsive way in which Mrs. Sterling moved past the saloon-keeper, instead of turning back, as he had meant that she should do, maddened him beyond control. A fearful oath, coupled with a vile epithet, fell from his lips; and catching her roughly by the arm, he jerked her toward the door.

Uttering a fierce cry and springing forward in a quick bound, the boy who had tried to conceal his face when he saw Mrs. Sterling enter the bar-room was upon Hanlan now, grappling him with the fury of a savage beast, and bearing him to the floor in his sudden onset.

A scene of the wildest confusion followed instantly. Hanlan, who was a powerful man, struggled quickly to his feet and threw off his assailant, but the boy was back upon him with the quickness of a flash, and would have struck him in the face if the saloon-keeper had not been something of a pugilist and skilled in parrying blows.

The odds were against the lad. The fiery strength of sudden passion had to give way and die out helplessly in the grasp of superior force. Hanlan was permitted to punish him severely, and then to hand him over to a compliant constable, who locked him up in jail for the night, though every man who witnessed the assault knew that the boy had made it in defence of his mother.

All this passed in a few minutes, breaking in upon the quiet of Jimmy Hanlan's respectable saloon like a summer whirlwind, and raging for its brief season as wildly. When it was over and

order again restored, all the pleasant hilarity of the company was gone, and one after another began dropping out and going home. The anger which most of Hanlan's customers had felt toward the "savage young dog," as some of them had called him, began to give way in their minds to a feeling of admiration for his brave defence of his mother, and a regret that Hanlan had been permitted to punish him so severely and then have him locked up in jail. More than one of them silently resolved to appear and go the lad's bail if the saloon-keeper persisted in having him tried for assault and battery, and so making an example of him, as he had threatened to do. Others determined to see Hanlan the first thing in the morning and persuade him to let the matter drop.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. STERLING had been gone for nearly half an hour, and Mrs. Payne, who sat watching by her sick child, was beginning to feel uneasy about her neighbor. The storm showed no abatement, the wind still roaring and shrieking and the rain falling heavily. Without any warning of approaching footsteps, the door was pushed open, and Mrs. Sterling came in almost as silently as a ghost. Not more ghostly were her movements than her face. That was as white and still and as full of despair as the face of a lost spirit.

"What's the matter? Nothing happened to Mr. Sterling, I hope?" said Mrs. Payne, alarmed at the manner and appearance of her friend.

Mrs. Sterling did not reply. She only stared strangely at her neighbor.

"Alice is better, I think—hasn't nigh so much fever," said Mrs. Payne, trying to break the spell that was on Mrs. Sterling, but the latter did not seem to hear what she said.

"My dear friend, what is it? You frighten me! What has happened?"

"Happened! O my God!" and Mrs. Sterling clasped her hands together, and lifted her dry eyes upward with a look of beseeching anguish.

"He isn't dead?"

"Dead! Who? Where?" Mrs. Sterling gave a start. "No, no," she replied, mournfully, growing quiet again. "Nobody's dead. If that were all, I could bless God. Dead!" she went on, a little wild now in her manner, as if losing herself. "Oh, the dead are all right—the dead are safe. I am happy in my dead. It is for the living that I mourn; it is for them that my heart is ready to break."

Mrs. Payne drew her arm about her suffering friend with the loving tenderness of a sister, saying as she did so,

"The living and the dead are alike in the hands of God. We must not despair. In him is our help."

Mrs. Sterling only shook her head.

"Tell me what has happened. All may not be as dark as it seems to you now. Perhaps I may be able to find some gleams of light."

"My boy is in jail!" was answered, in a cry that was full of the deepest pain.

"What? In jail? Oh, Mrs. Sterling!"

"But not for a crime, thank God!" said Mrs. Sterling, seeing an expression in her neighbor's face that she did not like—"not for a crime, thank God! He could not see his mother insulted and keep down his angry passions, my poor boy! He was at Hanlan's saloon when I went in there to look for his father; and when Hanlan swore at me and tried to shove me out into the street, George sprang upon him like a tiger. But it was of no use. He was only a boy, and Hanlan beat him dreadfully. Then a constable who was in the saloon arrested him and carried him off to jail. Hanlan ordered him to do it with as much authority as if he'd been a judge or the sheriff, and the constable did as he was told."

"What was George doing at Hanlan's saloon? How came he in town?" asked Mrs. Payne.

The light which had flashed into Mrs. Sterling's face while speaking in defence of her boy died out as suddenly as it had appeared.

"That is worst of all," she answered. "When I saw him there, even though he rushed to my pro-

tection, I felt as if I had received a heavy blow. The hurt went very deep, and I feel the ache here so dreadfully that it seems as if it must kill me;" and she drew her hand over her heart. "Oh, Mrs. Payne, was my cup not bitter enough, that I must have this added?"

"Good may come of this trouble," said the neighbor, trying to comfort her. "It's a severe remedy; but if it cures George of going to drinking saloons, you may be thankful for what has happened."

Mrs. Sterling did not reply, but sat wringing her hands.

"Where is your husband?" inquired Mrs. Payne. But before an answer could be made the door opened, and Sterling himself came staggering in.

One glance, a frightened cry, and the poor wife dropped senseless to the floor. No wonder, for the face upon which her eyes rested was covered all over with blood.

There was considerable excitement in the public mind of Delhi on the next day. The *Eagle* contained two local paragraphs that set people to talking and gave the advocates of temperance an

opportunity to call attention to the evil in their midst. They were as follows: First:

"A SERIOUS AFFAIR. — An altercation took place in Schroder's saloon last night between a man named Squire and Wesley Green. It is said that the former made some insulting remark about Green's mother, which the latter resented, when Squire struck him a heavy blow on one of his temples, knocking him senseless. He was taken home immediately, but at the hour we went to press this morning was still unconscious. Serious results are feared by the doctor."

Second:

"AN EXCITEMENT AT JIMMY HANLAN'S.—The visitors at this quiet house were treated to a little episode not in the bills last evening. Between nine and ten o'clock a certain woman whose husband is not as steady as he might be looked in at Jimmy's to see if he were about. Visitations of this kind are not agreeable affairs, especially to a man like our friend Hanlan. She had been there before, and Jimmy had remonstrated with her in a gentlemanly way, at the same time insisting that he could not permit her to annoy his customers. But all this went for nothing. She made her appearance

again last night, when Hanlan took her by the arm to lead her to the door, but, presto! the woman's son, who it seems is following in the footsteps of his father, sprang upon him like a young tiger. There was an exciting scene for a few moments. But Jimmy is quite able to take care of himself, and so, after punishing the fierce young savage as he deserved, had him locked up in jail. Those who witnessed the scene say that it was an animated affair."

As the day wore on a great many new facts appertaining to these two incidents, as well as a great many exaggerated rumors, got afloat in the public mind, and a large number of persons became disturbed and indignant. At a very early hour in the morning, Hanlan, acting under the advice of one of his customers who was feeling the quicker beat of the common pulse, had seen to it that George Sterling was discharged from arrest. The editor of the *Eagle*, moved thereto by some plain talk from citizens who had cause for deploring the baleful effect of thirty saloons in a population of five thousand souls, expressed regret at having treated the matter with an appearance of levity.

Meantime, the thrill of a new hope was being felt in the hearts of many. Strange tidings floated on the air. The *Eagle* of that morning had despatches from two or three towns in Ohio which read like the dreams of a romance. The news contained in these despatches was upon every tongue. There was laughing, scoffing, wonder, approval, doubt, depreciation and enthusiasm, just as one and another stood in reference to the drinking question or to religion. The *Eagle*, which on the day before had made a pleasant joke over the single despatch from one of the Ohio towns which it contained, now took the matter more seriously to heart, and had a brief article assuming the ground that the whole thing was degrading to woman and a profanation of religion—a mere blaze of fanaticism that would soon die out and leave things worse than before. It expressed its confident belief that the women of Delhi had too much good sense and too much womanly delicacy to be ever drawn into a similar folly.

Three sorrowing women drew together late in the afternoon of that day. They were Mrs. Rhoda Green, Mrs. Wilder, wife of Rev. Jason Wilder, and Mrs. Amy Gordon. The meeting was at Mrs.

Green's house, whither her tearful sisters had come to offer her their sympathy. Wesley Green was still unconscious, but Doctor Sandford had recognized some favorable symptoms, and spoke encouragingly of the case.

These were all women of deep and earnest piety, and used to going to God in daily prayer and supplication. They believed in prayer as a potent agency, not in changing God's purpose or making him more considerate of his creatures, but in so changing man's attitude toward God, and the spiritual sphere by which we are surrounded, as to make it possible for him to impart the blessings he stands ever ready to give, and determine the beneficent agencies he is ever ready to set in operation.

The new movement against intemperance, the first reports of which were just coming to their ears, had affected them with a half-bewildering but glad surprise. It seemed too good to be true. But day after day brought fresh intelligence, and the little fire which had blazed up so suddenly was increasing to a flame against the gathering strength of which nothing seemed able long to stand.

Into the quiet of an upper room these three women, despairing of help in man, went humbly to lay their case and that of their suffering sisters in Delhi before God. First, as they sat down together, Mrs. Green opened the Bible and read in a low, tender voice, which almost sobbed with its deep pathos, the one hundred and forty-second Psalm:

"I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man who knew me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name; the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."

Then they all knelt close together, and Mrs. Green led them in prayer.

"O Lord," she said, "our Father and our Friend, our Saviour and our Redeemer! As David did of old, we thy suffering children have come to lay our complaints before thee, and to show thee our trouble. Our spirits are overwhelmed. We have looked unto the right hand and the left, but there is no man to help us; refuge has failed; no man careth for our souls. And now we cry unto thee, O Lord! Thou alone art our refuge, our portion in the land of the living. Hear our cries, O Lord! for we are brought very low. They who are against us are stronger than we, and there is no help for us except in our God. O Lord! it cannot be that evil is stronger than good. It cannot be that the floods of sorrow now sweeping over and desolating our land are never to be stayed. Oh, hasten the time when the power of thy word shall stir the souls of the people. Let thy Spirit draw very near to strengthen and put courage into the hearts of thy servants everywhere, that they discomfit their enemies as the Amalekites were discomfited before the Lord when they fought against Israel.

"O Lord! we would ask of thee concerning this new thing, and seek thy guidance. We know that if it be from thee it cannot come to naught, that if it be a descent of spiritual forces to a lower plane —a manifestation of thy power in the very presence of the people—not all the hosts of hell shall prevail against it. Our weak flesh may shrink from girding on the armor and going forth to battle, but heart and flesh shall not fail, O Lord our Strength and our Redeemer! if we but hear thy call. Speak to us thy servants! Let us hear thy still small voice in the silence of our waiting souls, and if it shall say, Go forward, we will go."

When they arose from their knees and looked one upon another, each saw a new expression in the face of her sister. The signs of reviving hope, of a rallying courage, of strength and confidence, shone in their gentle faces. Mrs. Green was first to speak.

"My sisters," she said, "we are in the nearer presence of our Lord; let us open our minds to him. We have met in his name, and he has told us that where two or three are gathered together in his name he will be in their midst. Everywhere in his holy book he tells us to pray to him, and gives unnumbered assurances that he will answer

our prayers. How the answer will come no one knows, but it is enough that we desire heavenly gifts and blessings, good that is genuine for ourselves and our neighbors, and sincerely and unselfishly pray for them, doing at the same time all in our power for the attainment of what we desire. God will surely answer our prayers, not according to our ignorance, but according to his own unerring wisdom. For this we have his unfailing word."

They separated, agreeing to meet that evening at the house of Mrs. Wilder and ask her husband, Rev. Jason Wilder, a good and true man, to counsel with them. Ten women met at the clergyman's residence. Among them were, besides the three already introduced, Mrs. Judge Hanson, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Sterling, Mrs. Judge Isett, the wives of two clergymen besides Mrs. Wilder—true, earnest Christian women—and the wife of Dr. Sandford. With only one exception, all of these women had suffered deeply from the curse of intemperance, some in their husbands or brothers and some in their sons. It had robbed their lives of all sweetness and turned their joy into sorrow.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Wilder, who

read a chapter from the Bible, and then offered up, in a voice tremulous with emotion, a prayer for divine guidance.

"Until now, O Lord!" he said, "it has seemed that there was no hope for the people, as if there was no hand strong enough to save them. All the counsels of man have come to naught. The barriers that his hand have set against the fiery flood have been swept away like heaps of chaff or stubble. But now there breaks upon us a song of good tidings, and from this side and that come echoes and glad refrains that are stirring the hearts of the people with joy. Is it indeed thy hand, O Lord? We believe that it is. Open our eyes that we may see the hidings of thy power and know that it is indeed from thee. Our sisters here before thee are full of sorrow. Thou seest them all. Let the moans of their bitter anguish come up before thee. The man of sin has prevailed against them until now; his arrows have pierced their beloved ones; they are grieving as those without hope. Turning from all their trust in man, they come to thee and implore thy help. Uncover for them the arm of thy power, O Lord! They are ready for this work if thy blessing be upon it.

Guide their counsels to-night, and show them thy way."

After the prayer, Mrs. Rhoda Green said:

"My dear sisters, when these strange tidings were first heard I said 'No; this is not the way.' My womanly nature and my religious feelings both sustained a shock. I thought of what our Lord had said about praying at the corners of streets to be seen of men and about entering into our closets and shutting the door. But I soon saw that if this were to be understood only in its literal sense it forbade praying in the great congregation as well as at street corners, and that the only things our blessed Lord meant to condemn were insincere and pharisaical prayers.

"The manifest blessing that has followed this movement shows that it is good, and all good is from God. Whole towns, where the curse of liquor-selling has been upon the people for years, and where every attempt to throw it off has proved utterly vain, have been emancipated in a week. And, what is more, large numbers of persons who had all their lives been indifferent to religion have come under its heavenly influence.

"Think, dear sisters, of this our beloved town

free from the curse of rum! Does not the very thought make your hearts leap? Delhi free from the iron rule of an oppressor more cruel than death! Oh, my sisters, God has called us to this work, and I, for one, cannot shut my ears to the call. In deep thankfulness I lift my heart and bless his name for showing us a way when it seemed as if there was no way."

Where Mrs. Green stood ready to lead, all these her suffering sisters were ready to follow. It required no second appeal. Organization was resolved upon at once.

At nine o'clock next morning Delhi heard an unusual sound. One of the church bells rang out, at this unwonted hour, a summons for the people. Men paused on the street or at their work and listened. Women looked at each other, and asked, What does this mean? Stroke after stroke of the bell went pulsing through the air, and the sound had in it some new signification, and hearts were stirred by it strangely. A spiritual atmosphere more subtle than the finest ether, an atmosphere in which the soul lives and breathes, received, by some mysterious correspondence, an impulse from the tones of that bell, and bore it from mind to mind and heart to

heart, until almost every man and woman in Delhi felt an impression of something not clearly understood. The thought stirred by this vague impression was singularly alike with nearly all, and their guesses struck the truth.

"Hark!" said Judge Hanson, who had gone into the "Hanlan House" to take his second glass, in order to bring up his nerves to the required tension for the day's business, and who was just raising the glass to his lips when the church bell rang out loud and clear. "What does that mean?"

He paused with the liquor yet untasted, and stood listening, his countenance growing grave.

"It means church, I suppose," remarked a person who stood near him.

"It means a different kind of church from any we've had in Delhi, or I'm mistaken," replied Judge Hanson.

"What!" exclaimed the other, at once comprehending his meaning. "You don't imagine it's a call for the crusaders?"

"I'll bet my life on it," returned the judge. "There was a meeting of women at Jason Wilder's last night, and he's just the man to set them going."

"The whining old hypocrite!" broke in Hanlan, with an angry growl in his voice.

"No, Jason Wilder is not a hypocrite," answered the judge, turning to the saloon-keeper. "He's anything but that. And if he gives countenance to a whisky crusade in Delhi, the sooner you shut up shop the better. There are good women enough in his church to pray all the saloon-keepers out of town in a week."

"Good women! Faugh!" sneered Hanlan.

"See here, my friend," said Judge Hanson, with a shade of official authority in his voice; "let me give you a piece of good advice at the outset of this business. It may save you some trouble—a broken head, maybe."

The judge here lifted his glass and drank off the contents.

"I don't understand you," replied Jimmy, looking dashed at so unexpected a remark.

"It's just this," said the judge: "when this crusade begins—and I've a fancy that it's beginning now—the wives of a good many of your best customers will be among the crusaders."

"I wouldn't give much for a man who'd let his wife—"

"Silence!" cried the judge, his countenance growing dark and stern.

Hanlan stepped back, while a look, half of surprise and half of fear, came into his face.

"You're on dangerous ground, my friend," said the judge, in a warning voice.

"That's so," broke in another of his customers. "It doesn't follow because men drink your liquors that they will permit you to speak lightly of their wives or mothers. I won't, for one;" and the man's face darkened at the very thought, while a threat trembled in his voice as he uttered the last sentence.

"A wise man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself," remarked the judge, "but the simple pass on and are punished. If you are wise, you will keep a bridle on your tongue; and if you should have a call from a praying-band, treat them civilly if you don't want a broken head."

"But you really don't think, Judge Hanson," said the individual who had joined him in admonishing the saloon-keeper, "that there is any likelihood of our women going into this thing?"

"Why not? If praying will stop the liquor business—and it does seem to be doing it, think and

say what we will—you may count on our women. They've suffered enough by the infernal traffic—begging your pardon, friend Hanlan—and I for one won't put a feather in their way. There's one good woman who may be counted on, and her name is Mrs. Judge Hanson. A purer, truer, better woman doesn't live; and if any man dares to insult her—"

What punishment he would mete out to the offender the judge did not say, for at the moment a young lawyer who had been standing at the bar turned and said to him,

"But, Judge Hanson, for women to come into a man's place of business and interfere with it is a trespass, and must be so regarded by the law. A man's house is his castle. I consider this whole thing wrong. Apart from any opinion you or I may hold as to the delicacy and propriety of women going in bands about the streets and singing and praying on the pavement and in groggeries and drinking-saloons, the question resolves itself into one of simple right and wrong. The law gives our friend Jimmy Hanlan a license to deal in liquors, and so long as he keeps a decent and orderly house the law must protect him."

"That's so," said Hanlan, who stood listening;

"and if I'm interfered with, I shall appeal to the law for protection."

"Once upon a time," quietly remarked Judge Hanson, "it happened in a certain community that the enactment of laws and the administration thereof got into the hands of bad men, gamblers and cutthroats, who made use of their power to plunder and oppress the people, who could not get rid of them by the ordinary legal process, because of their skill in ballot-box stuffing and other election frauds. As the well-being and safety of the people were things of greater moment than any mere technical observance of laws made for their hurt and not their well-being, the people determined to set the laws at defiance. To this end they organized a vigilance committee, and after due warning laid violent hands upon their law-protected plunderers, hanging some and banishing the rest, and all the people said Amen! And they'll do the same, mark my word for it, whenever a woman's vigilance committee comes down on the rum-sellers of Delhi. As Mr. Lincoln once declared, the nation is before the Constitution and of infinitely more value; and to save the nation one may break the Constitution. So the people are

before and of more value than the laws, and to save the people we may break the laws if under their sanction, evils worse than death are scattered broadcast through the land."

"Rather a dangerous doctrine, I should say, Judge Hanson," replied the young lawyer, "and liable to great abuse."

"Let us take a case in point," answered the judge. "It is by illustration that we get the clear view of a question. Hanlan, here, has license to sell gin and beer and brandy, though, if the truth were known, it isn't worth the paper it is written on, and he knows it."

"Isn't that talking a little wildly, judge?" said the young man.

"Not at all. If you don't know the law, I do. Under our general license system none but a regular tavern-keeper can sell liquor at retail, and he must have in his house a certain number of beds and other appliances of tavern-keeping, none of which you will find in this house."

"Are you sure of that, Judge Hanson?" said the lawyer.

"Very sure. An attempt was made a few years ago to break up one or two of the worst dens in

the place, where boys were enticed to drink and gamble. The indictment charged a breach of the license law, all the clearly-worded sections of which were read in open court by the prosecuting attorney. To have made this law operative in our town would have been to shut up over twenty drinking-places, this among the rest. There was a stir among the liquor men, you may be sure. Their rights (!) and interests were imperiled. A conviction in these cases would be equivalent to the destruction of an industry in which large capital was invested. There were curses both loud and deep against the fanatical, meddling temperance men, who waited in anxious suspense for the result.

"I saw how it would be from the first. The liquor men had too much money and too much influence. What it cost I do not know—some said over ten thousand dollars. But the jury stood, at the first count, six for conviction and six for acquittal. Four, after the second day, went over to the 'not guilty' side. Two remained firm for conviction and kept the others out for three days, when, no prospect of an agreement being apparent, the court discharged them. In disgust and despair the temperance men abandoned the prosecution,

and there the matter dropped. Delhi said, through its courts and juries, 'Let the work of destruction go on though mothers' hearts continue to bleed and break over the ruin of their boys.'

"But to the illustration, which I had almost forgotten. Hanlan, as I was saying, has a license to sell gin and beer and brandy. Now, let me suppose a case. You have a wife who is very dear to you. Wives are very dear and precious, and so are husbands, sometimes, if we are to believe what women say. Unhappily, your wife has acquired the habit of using opium. She knows it is hurting her, and resolves to give up the dangerous practice. But it is your neighbor the druggist's business to sell opium, and he may do so under the protection of the law. He has a great many opium customers, and the profit on this part of his business is large. He knows that every ounce of the seductive drug he sells does harm, and only harm. And yet, hard of heart and greedy of gain, he not only pursues the traffic, but uses every means in his power to enlarge the sale of opium and entice men and women to use it.

"But your wife, seeing her danger, resolves to give it up; your heart leaps with gladness. The

shadows which had fallen upon your home are lifted. Bright anticipations again smile down on the happy future. Alas for the brief delusion! Your neighbor the druggist has lost a good customer; if your wife remains firm, she will influence other women who are enslaved as she was to break loose from their fearful bondage, and he may lose many others. So your neighbor the druggist sets a snare for the feet of your wife, and she falls into it, and then the shadows are darker than ever on your home and heart. You go to this neighbor and implore him for God's sake never to sell your wife opium again. He orders you from his store or treats you with derision. What then?"

Two deep red spots burned on the young lawyer's cheeks. There were flashes in his dilating eyes.

"What then?" A quiver of repressed indignation shook the voice of Judge Hanson. "Your neighbor the druggist has law on his side. He is doing business under its protection. His house is his castle. He may sell his cursed drug to whom he pleases. What then? What if he persisted in tempting your wife every time she came in his way, that he may profit through her injury? Will you sit down and fold your hands and let his devilish

work go on, sanctioned by the law though it be, until the wife you love so tenderly, the gentle mother of your children, lies wretched and ruined at your feet, for ever lost? I trow not! Nature has some rights left that no human laws can extinguish. Are you answered?"

"I am answered," returned the lawyer, in a subdued voice.

"Are not husbands and sons and brothers as dear to women as our wives and daughters and sisters are to us?" added the judge. "And if, in a case like the one I have supposed, you or I or any man worthy of the name would take the remedy into his own hands, no matter how summary and violent it might be, shall heart-broken wives and mothers, whom the laws fail to protect, be condemned or hindered when they only pray in the presence of the destroyers of their beloved ones that God would touch their hearts with pity and lead them to abandon their soul-destroying business? Shame on the man who talks about legal obstructions in a case like this!"

CHAPTER IX.

WITHIN twenty minutes after the bell rang out its sudden and imperative call every seat in Mr. Wilder's church was full and the aisles crowded. It was remarkable how the thought of the people took a common direction and guessed the meaning of this unusual summons.

At precisely half-past nine o'clock Mr. Wilder arose in the pulpit, and without preface or remark of any kind opened the hymn book and read with the fine impressiveness he could throw into his voice, now more than usually touched with feeling, the words of a hymn that is rarely if ever sung without a peculiar influence, tender and tearful often, on the hearts of those who hear it:

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

"Though, like a wanderer
Weary and lone,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

"There let my way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

"Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

"And when on joyful wings
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

For a few moments a deep hush pervaded the large assembly. Then, clear and sweet, breaking through the deep stillness, rose the voice of Sister Rhoda Green, leading in the hymn. The whole assembly joined and sang it to the end with a fervor that increased with every succeeding verse.

Many had come from mere curiosity, and many with light words on their lips and opposition in their hearts. But before the hymn was ended there were few present who did not feel strangely moved. Scoffing or ridicule was in no man's thought now. At the close of the hymn Mr. Wilder knelt in the pulpit. The rustle of garments and the noise of feet, as men and women bowed themselves in prayer, died away, and there was another hush, so deep that it seemed as if no living soul was present. On this waiting silence the minister's voice fell, and every sentence he uttered, as he prayed with and for the people, made a deep impression upon those who heard him.

"O Lord!" he said, "thou knowest the hearts of those who are bowed before thee this morning, the sorrows that cloud their days and fill their nights with weeping. They have come here at thy call, as they believe, and now ask for light and guidance.

It cannot be that those who live among us by waste and destruction, who, like locusts, eat up every green thing that comes in their way, are to go on destroying for ever. It cannot be that our young men, the hope of society and the seed of the church, are to be stricken continually with this blight and mildew. It cannot be that this great evil which is ruining precious lives, desolating our fairest homes and breaking the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands of helpless wives and mothers is too strong for thy almighty arm!

"It cannot be, O Lord! We know that it cannot be. But thou workest in the world by human agencies; and because the men who have been chosen to make laws for the people, and to see that they were administered for their good, have not had thy fear before their eyes, but have sacrificed unto strange gods, causing the children of this people to pass through the fire unto Moloch, has this terrible thing so long prevailed. If the servants of thy people had not shut their ears to the great cry of agony that is going up all over the land, thou wouldest long ago have made them the instruments of thy love and power. But they would not listen to thy voice. They turned them

rather to the men of Belial, hearkening to their evil counsels and doing their will.

"And so the cry is still before thee, O Lord! But now, moved to the work of saving the people, other human agencies are coming into action. The crushed, down-trodden and neglected ones who so long sat weeping in the valley and the shadow of death have lifted themselves up and appeared in thy presence and said unto thee, 'Send us, O Lord! and we will go!' And if thou sendest them clad in the armor of faith and with the sword of thy truth in their hands, not all the powers of hell shall stand against them.

"And now, O Lord! we humbly ask of thee wisdom. Be very near to us in our deliberations this morning. Make plain to thy servants the duty of the hour. Speak to our waiting sisters; and if they can hear thy still small voice saying to them, 'Go up,' they will go."

There were few in the house who did not feel, as the preacher closed his prayer, a new impression of spiritual power. The large assemblage, including even the most indifferent to religion and the most skeptical in regard to its influence, was subdued and constrained into a respect approaching in some

cases to awe. After the prayer, Mr. Wilder arose and said:

"Let us sing to the praise of the Lord the hymn on page eighty-four:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Crown him, ye martyrs of our God,
Who from his altar call;
Extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Hail him the heir of David's line,
Whom David Lord did call;
The God incarnate, Man divine!
And crown him Lord of all.

"Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
The ransomed of the fall,
Hail him who saves you by his grace,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at his feet,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,

To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all."

Rarely has old "Coronation" been sung with the power and feeling given to it on this memorable occasion as the whole congregation broke in with the sweet voice of Sister Green, rising soft and clear on the hushed air, and swelled the hymn into a grand and exultant chorus.

"We crown him Lord of all," said the preacher, in the deep silence that followed this outburst of praise, "when we do his will. He asks of us no honor and no service beyond this. You have come here to-day, my sisters, seeking to know his will, and your hearts are set on doing that will if he but make it known unto you. And he is making it known in visible manifestations of his power on the right hand and on the left. And these manifestations have come in response to prayer. How it is that prayer gives such marvelous results let us now consider, so that we may not fall into the mistake of some who believe that God waits for us poor, blind, ignorant, self-seeking sinners to ask him to bless and save the world before he will do it. That is not so. He is full of tender mercy and loving-kindness, and is ever seeking to save that

which was lost. But in the spiritual as well as in the natural world all forces are determined by laws of order, and only when these laws are made operative can the forces act. We can all understand how, when we go to God and humbly ask him to help and guide us when surrounded by difficulties, this very submission of ourselves to his divine will may bring us into a state to receive the graces of his spirit—patience, self-denial, love of the neighbor—and so make it possible for our loving Father to remove from our way the obstructions that were needed for discipline. Not simply because we asked him for help did he send it, but because our asking brought us into a new spiritual condition and made it possible for him to answer our prayer, and make the answer a blessing and not a curse. We all know by many discouraging experiences that our prayers do not always receive the answers we long for, and yet we know also that whenever we go to God and humbly pray to him he sends rest and peace into our hearts, even in the midst of direst troubles, and gives us patience and strength. A blessing always follows prayer, a blessing to our souls, though our special requests be denied.

"But the question that most interests us to-day

is, How do our prayers affect others? God cannot convert a soul simply because we ask him to do it. An evil man must turn from the evil of his ways, and that of his own volition, before God can heal him. The prayers of a mother may and often do work marvelously with the children of her love, not because the Spirit of God begins to strive with them in answer to her prayer, for the Spirit of God is ever striving with the children of men and seeking to turn them from evil to good, but because, in the world where our spirits dwell, there is an atmosphere on which love and thought move, passing from one soul to another as freely as light and sound pass in the air of this outer world. And when a mother prays for her children, her thought and love, burdened with solicitude and potent with heavenly affections, penetrate their souls and impress them with her states of reverence for God and a sense of his loving presence. Thus, when a pious mother prays fervently for her wandering boy, her heart goes out after him with all its affections quickened by a diviner tenderness than burns in any human love, and her thought reaches him. Under its pressure upon his consciousness, memory is quickened. He thinks of his mother, and then some lov-

ing angel, perceiving his better state of mind, may bring to his remembrance the innocent days of childhood, showing him the face of his mother, sweet and serious, as she once bent over him listening to his evening devotions. So God can reach him through his mother's prayers. Pray for your children, mothers, for your husbands, wives, and, all Christian men and women, for those who are near and dear to you, and so become God's instruments in their salvation. Brethren and sisters, as God liveth, your prayers shall not be in vain."

Here Mr. Wilder paused for a few moments to let the minds of his audience take rest. Then he resumed, speaking more calmly:

"But how can our prayers affect those to whom we cannot come near in thought and love, as in the case of a mother and her children, and with those between whom and ourselves there is a bond of love or some other spiritual relationship? Can we, by prayer in our churches or in our closets, turn the hearts of the men who are scattering disease and death among our people, and cause them to repent and cease to do this great evil? I think not. I am unable to see any element of power in such prayers, at least so far as these men are concerned.

If God could have caused them to repent and turn from their evil ways, he would have done it long ago. He would not have waited these many dreary years, seeing hundreds of victims go down to death and hell, and never put forth his hand. No, my friends. He has not been waiting for prayers at home and in the sanctuary, but for prayers that shall reach the ears and penetrate the hearts and consciences of those prayed for. By such prayers he can work. Marvelous things is he doing in sister towns through the agency of such prayers, and marvelous things will he do here if we set the same great agencies at work.

"But shall we not pray here and at home that God would remove from among us this abomination of desolation? Surely, yea! But to what end, you ask, if such prayers can do nothing toward turning these men from their work of destruction? For the sake of ourselves and the instrumentalities that such prayers will bring into life I make answer. Let the people assemble every day in all the churches in Delhi and invoke God's blessing on this work, and then God will fill their hearts with a desire to see it go on to complete success, and that desire will quicken thought, and thought

will leap into action. Every Christian man in Delhi will become a centre of influence. He will talk of the evil in our midst, and show forth its magnitude. From heart to heart and mind to mind a gracious impulse will go. We shall have a new public sentiment. Oh, friends, Christian people, pray everywhere, and without ceasing, that this curse shall be lifted from our town. But fail not to pray where the influence of prayer is most needed. The stronghold must be assaulted and taken if we would conquer the enemy."

Men who had no faith in prayer held their breaths while the minister expounded, in his careful speech, the true sources of its power. And others who had smiled or jested, or sneered at the praying women of whom they read, took his words to heart and pondered them deeply. They saw something more than they had dreamed of in the remarkable results that everywhere followed the instrumentality of prayer offered to God in purity of heart, and under forms of expression that touched the feelings of the men who heard, and set their thoughts in new directions.

"But I have said enough," added Mr. Wilder. "The meeting has been called at the request of

many suffering women who, despairing of help in man, come now to God in his sanctuary asking him to show them a way of escape, and to give them the strength and the courage needed to walk therein. It is their meeting, and I now nominate Sister Rhoda Green for the chair. All in favor of this nomination will say, I." Every voice approved. Then Sister Green arose, and coming forward stood up in the chancel. She was a woman of over sixty years of age, a little above the medium height, looking taller than she really was because of her slender physique. Her face was almost classic in outline, and her mouth, whenever she spoke, sweet and tender, but serious even to sadness when at rest. Her eyes were large and dark, her face pale almost to whiteness and her hair gray and glossy like spun glass. The saintliness of her pure soul, tried and purified as silver in the crucible, shone through the revealing tissues of her beautiful countenance. She seemed, as she stood up in the chancel that morning, a messenger from heaven. And so she was.

"Dear friends," she said, and her voice, so clear and calm and full of womanly sweetness, thrilled the hearts of all present as it rose upon the silent

air. "This is no common occasion. Never in the history of our town has there been an assemblage of the people so burdened with momentous consequences as this. There is an evil among us of such a malignant and fatal character that all other evils in the catalogue of human woes grow dwarfed in its presence. If scarlet fever attack our children, it may bear them down to the grave, or it may leave them deaf or with some life-long physical infirmity, but it cannot touch their moral sense; it cannot debase them to a level lower than the brute; it cannot destroy their souls. Not so this evil thing of which I speak. Under its power all that is true and good and pure in our beloved ones is consumed by a very fire from hell. Bodily health, filial love, spiritual life, all shrivel up and vanish away. We see them wasting before our eyes, in body and soul, under the curse of a marasmus more exhausting and malignant than any the world has known.

"Up to this time, year after year, the awful scourge of which I speak has been rapidly increasing in Delhi, and no man's hand has been put forth to stay its dreadful ravages. In vain have we, heart-breaking and heart-broken mothers, reached out our hands, and with streaming eyes prayed that

something might be done to save our children. In vain have our stricken wives and sisters, too many of whom now sit sorrowing in broken and desolate homes, pleaded for their husbands and brothers. We might as well have cried to deaf adders. The spell as of some great sorcerer is upon the people. Think of it, dear friends! There are in Delhi five thousand souls—precious and immortal souls, sent into the world that they might be good and happy—and there are in Delhi thirty men who for the love of money are busily at work night and day in destroying the image of God in these immortal souls, in sowing among us the seeds of that malignant and fatal disease to which I have just referred. And the people of Delhi go quietly about their business heedless of this terrible work; or if some upon whom the curse falls sorest, cry out in their agony and in desperate excitement demand the suppression of a traffic that injures all and blesses none, law lifts up its cold, hard hand and shakes it in their faces, saying, 'Stand back! Keep off! These men have vested rights, and their interest may not be touched.'

"Vested rights! The right to scatter sorrow and sickness, despair and death, among the people!

Think of it! Thirty men holding these rights, and the people without remedy! Thirty men who fear not God nor regard man commissioned to sow crime and death that they may reap a harvest of money!

"Bear with me for a few minutes while I give you, in language far better than I can frame, a description of the enemy we have in our midst. It is by the president of one of our colleges, who has had large opportunity to know of what he speaks. He says"—and Sister Green read from a paper that she held in her hand—

"As a foe to all the social interests of men there is no other to be compared with this, no other that wars so ruthlessly upon home and all that sacred circle of interests of which home is the centre. Back of all its visible ravages, and deeper than all these, there lies a field of devastation which has never been fully explored and can never be more than partially reported. It is the wasted realm of the social affections, the violated sanctuary of domestic peace. From the under-world of suppressed wretchedness there comes up to the ear of human pity many a piercing cry of those who writhe under the slow torments of a desolate heart

and dying hope. Yet all this which meets the eye and pains the ear is but the overflow of misery; this is what inadvertently escapes through chasms violently rent open, and it tells sadly of the sea of anguish that is stifled for ever in its secret recesses.

"Within this sphere of social devastation the curse of drink has a twofold operation, the unseen and the seen, the process and the result. The first lies in that vast amount of untold and unutterable wretchedness which is carefully hidden, so long as concealment is possible, within the bosom of multitudes of families which the destroyer has entered and marked for his own. As yet his victory is incomplete. His victim has not yet shaken off all the restraints of affection, nor burst through the barriers of reserve and shame. He yet cleaves, with a sensitiveness that is very significant, to his shattered remnant of character. And others within that smitten home are still more fondly concealing the terrible change. Theirs is a wretchedness of which the world must not know, for it has in it the stain of shame. The keenest inflictions are perhaps those which attend the incipient stages of ruin. Perhaps no after-pang will ever distress the heart like that which comes with the first conviction that

the love of drink has gained the mastery over the beloved one. And from that point onward through all the unrecorded history of a drunkard's progress, as seen and felt within the circle of those who love him, there is a bitterness of anguish which can be fully conceived only by those who have tasted the cup for themselves. To those without that circle there may be little to awake suspicion of the torture that is going on beneath the surface. It is not till the heart is consumed within them, not till despair has grown familiar and the whole hidden process of deprivation has reached its maturity, that the result comes forth to the surface and shows itself to the eyes of men. It is done in silence and secresy, almost before we dreamed of it.

"From this point the work is open and appalling indeed. Concealment is no longer sought, for it is felt to be no longer either possible or of any avail. The fire burned long repressed and slowly eating away every support within; now it has burst through and taken air, and the whole pile is ready to collapse in hopeless conflagration; and why should there be any further attempt at concealment?

"And now look at the visible results of the traffic on all the dearest interests of mankind.

Look at its handiwork as written out in woe and desolation on the whole face of society. Look on these innumerable hearts that have long silently bled over the ruin of all their dearest hopes, till they can bleed in silence no more. Myriads of such still sigh among the living, and many—oh how many!—myriads have hidden their crushed and weary hearts in the grave. See it yearly beggaring multitudes of families, quenching the light of many thousand homes in anguish and despair. Read the character and deserts of this traffic in the air of thriftlessness and dilapidation which it is every year spreading over a countless number of once prosperous and happy homes, read it in the depravation of character, the growing sottishness, of its victims, fallen from the sphere of hope and virtue and love, and pushed rapidly through a career of shame and sin toward graves of infamy. How many such, with those that love them still, are even now hiding their misery in obscure and comfortless hovels! How these sad refuges of the once happy and hopeful stare upon the traveler along all the highways and byways of our State! How they thicken within the broad circuit that is swept by the influence of some den of drink! Could the map of our

State be so drawn as to present a full picture of its social condition, and reveal to us, as we gazed on it, all these drink-ruined families, strown in their desolate huts over all its surface—could it be made transparent also, so as to reveal the burdens of grief that are hidden in these homes, the bursting hearts of parents for their ruined sons, of wives from whose life all joy and hope, all tenderness and comfort, have been blotted out, of children shame-crushed and doomed to penury and disgrace—could we thus look on all these stricken families, once affluent and respected, now doomed to meanness and want, each with its own peculiar history of sorrow,—we should ask no further witness to the heinous guilt of the traffic.

"Is this an exaggeration?" said Sister Green, dropping the hand with which she had held the paper and looking out over the still and breathless assembly. She stood silent for several moments.

"And men tell us that there is no remedy—that the State legalizes the traffic, and must protect it against all interference! But, my stricken and sorrowing sisters, there *is a remedy, thank God!*"

The voice of Sister Green rang out clear and strong, sending a thrill to the heart of every one.

"In vain for years have we called in our anguish upon men; in vain for years have we trusted in men; hope and confidence are gone. Men are not strong enough, on their own confession, to cope with this enemy, which they have not only hedged about with protective laws, but given a license to break law in order that they may for greater gain more terribly afflict the people. The law says that they shall not continue their deadly work on the holy Sabbath, but on each Lord's day the door of every saloon in Delhi stands open and the traffic goes on. The law says that they shall not sell drink to minors, and yet our youth are corrupted and the hearts of our mothers broken over the ruin of their boys. The law says that no one shall be permitted to sell liquor who does not keep a regular house of entertainment provided with beds for the accommodation of guests, and yet, out of the thirty drinking-places in Delhi, there are but nine that even pretend to be taverns in the common meaning of the term.

"What hope is there in man? None—none, my long-suffering sisters. He is stronger than we are, and calls himself wiser. He holds the reins of government, he creates all the laws and takes charge

of their administration. Good or evil, we can only submit.

"But under the rule which has left us helpless in the hands of men in whose hearts there is no pity our sorrows have so multiplied that we can bear them no longer, and in the bitterness of our despair in man we turn to God, who is a present help in every time of trouble, and he will deliver us. But not if we sit idle at home, my sisters.

"'Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord!
I'll bear the cross, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.'

"We must gird up our loins for the battle. We must take the sword of prayer and stand face to face with our enemy. God will surely give us the victory. Let me in your name thank Brother Wilder for setting before us so beautifully the nature and power of prayer. We all see clearer now, and in moving upon our common foe—as move we shall—we'll know our advantage and understand the right use of our weapons.

"Pardon me for having held you so long, but I am in such intense earnest about this matter that

heart and thought run over and carry me away in speech."

As the speaker sat down Mrs. Judge Hanson arose. She was a woman nearly as old as Mrs. Green, and had a dignified presence. She was well known in Delhi for her public spirit and her many charities. Intelligent and possessing great decision of character, she generally took a leading position in anything that required concerted action. All knew her to be a sufferer from the curse of intemperance. The judge was a hard drinker and had wasted much of his property, and they were now living very humbly as compared with their condition a few years back. She said, on rising,

"As Sister Green has thanked Brother Wilder in your name for his clear elucidation of the nature and power of prayer, let me thank Sister Green in your name also for her grand indictment of our enemy and his abettors as well. We know now just where we stand and wherein lies our hope, and will no longer wait for an arm of flesh. What I now desire to counsel is calmness and prudence. Let us not go forward until we are ready. We want the fullest possible concert of action. We

want every wife and mother and sister in town enrolled for duty in this warfare. If all are not able to take the field and stand face to face with the enemy, no matter. We must have homeguards and purveyors, and those have duties in camp as well as in the van of battle. We want all the women in Delhi enlisted in this cause. And we want the men to have a better understanding of the issue between us and the whisky-sellers, and if they will not help us in our crusade to stand off and give us the advantage of a fair conflict. And so I move that this meeting recommend the assembling to-morrow morning at nine o'clock in all our churches of their respective congregations, and that each of these meetings appoint a committee of three of their best and wisest women to meet in the evening in Brother Wilder's church for the arrangement of a plan that shall ensure the most efficient concert of action.

"I also move that a committee of five be appointed to notify the clergymen of each of these churches of the passage of this resolution, and to request them to have their bells rung at precisely nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

Sister Green offered these resolutions, when they

were adopted unanimously amid many exhibitions of enthusiasm.

Then, after singing the doxology,

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,"

the meeting adjourned.

CHAPTER X.

THREE or four saloon-keepers were present at this meeting.

"What do you think of all this?" said one, speaking to the other, as they walked away with soberer faces than when they came.

"I don't just like the look of it," was the answer.

"Nor do I. It means business."

"I should think it did. D'you know, Dan, I felt awful mean while that woman was speaking, and actually held down my head. My! but didn't she give us Jesse?"

"Didn't she, though? If all she made us out to be is really so, we're rather a scaly set."

"We don't pretend to be the salt of the earth."

"It wouldn't take a very long time for everything in it to spoil if we were the salt, ha? Would it?"

And the speaker twisted his face awry.

"But see here, Dan Harker," said his companion,

growing more serious. "What are we going to do about this business? If the women have their way, they'll run us out, sure."

"They'll never run me out," replied Harker, who had one of the best-paying saloons in the place. "My pile isn't big enough yet. They may sing and pray and preach till they grow deaf and blind. It's all the same to me. I never was driven to do a thing in my life, and I never mean to be."

"But if I understand the way they do these things, Dan, it isn't just driving, but praying and singing and persuading. They talk good and try to make us see the harm we're doing. The poor half-starving wives come along with the praying women and join with them in imploring us to quit the business, that their husbands may be saved. Now, you see, that's rather salty. And then again, Dan, these women are not the mere riff-raff of the town. I saw the wives and daughters of our best men there; and if they go into this thing heart and soul, their husbands and fathers are bound to stand by them."

"Well, suppose they do? My house is my castle, and all the husbands and fathers in Delhi,

with their praying and psalm-singing wives into the bargain, can't turn me out if I don't wish to go. My business is just as lawful as that of Jones the tailor or Fink the hatter. I hold a license from the State, and there isn't force enough in all this town to shut the doors of my saloon if I choose to keep it open."

"Don't be too sure of that, Dan. You noticed what Mrs. Green said about our licenses. Not one in ten of the people here knows anything about the license law. If its strict letter were enforced, you and I would be out in the cold instead of in our cosy saloons heaping up our pile."

The confident look went out of Harker's face.

"It isn't going to be a simple scare, mark my word for it, Dan. We're in for a fight, and a desperate one, too. Did you read in this morning's *Eagle* about the excitement in Xenia—how every family in town was identified with the crusade, as they call it, and every woman giving it her cordial support?"

"No; I haven't seen the *Eagle*," replied Harker.

"Really! then there's a bit of news that will surprise you. Here, let's go into Barney Dare's and look at his morning paper."

The two men crossed the street and entered a saloon on the opposite side.

"Got the *Eagle*, Barney?" said one of them, addressing a sallow little man who was mixing a glass of liquor.

Dare pointed to one of the tables in the room. Dan Harker and his companion sat down at this table, and the latter opened the paper and ran his eyes along the columns.

"Here it is. Just listen;" and he read:

"The excitement in Xenia is more intense than ever. It is safe to say that five hundred ladies were in the streets to-day engaged in the laudable work. The saloon-keepers are relenting, and more of them are permitting the ladies to hold prayers in their saloons."

"What?" interrupted Harker. "Relenting! They must be a white-livered set."

"Hundreds are signing the pledge," continued the other, reading on. "One old man who has been a hard drinker for many years said, as he signed the pledge, 'Twon't do any good—I can't reform; but for God's sake save the boys.'"

"That was a sockdolager," remarked the reader as he let the paper rest upon the table. "That's

the sort o' thing that tells—worth a million of sermons and prayers. Now, as for the boys, it's all wrong to sell 'em liquor. I never do if I know their ages, but we've plenty in the business that don't care a cuss who calls for a dram if he's got the money to pay for it. It's all wrong, but every trade has its scalawags, you know. Now, just listen to this;" and he lifted the paper and read on:

"There are four praying bands in the streets, each numbering about fifty ladies, while small parties are visiting families by invitation. A band of little girls are in the street singing temperance songs with thrilling effect. This afternoon a saloon known as the 'Shades of Death,' one of the worst places in the city, threw open its doors, and the proprietor invited the ladies to enter."

"Bah!" exclaimed Harker, in a tone of disgust.

"After prayer he took the ladies by the hand—"

"Faugh! I've no patience with the thing."

"And thanked them that they had influenced him to abandon the traffic—"

"Oh! oh dear! oh!" ejaculated Harker, in jeering contempt.

"Don't go off the handle, Dan. Keep cool. There's more coming. Now, brace yourself: And

then with his own hands he rolled his liquors into the street, and smashed in the heads of the barrels and kegs, and let mother earth drink up the poison."

Dan Harker, with an oath on his lips, got up hastily and strode across the bar-room, then came back and sat down beside his companion:

"If that don't beat the devil, I'm a fool! Smashed in the heads of his barrels?"

"Yes, smashed 'em in. That's just what it says."

"I don't believe a word of it. I swear I don't."

"You'd better believe. It's all told here as straight as a line. But I'm not done yet: A scene of great excitement followed. The news spread with lightning rapidity, and in fifteen minutes the streets were swarming with citizens. Songs of gladness filled the air, hands were shaken, prayers were offered up, and finally the multitude spontaneously struck up that grandest of songs, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'"

"A mere stubble fire," said Dan Harker. The sneer had faded away from his lips and his countenance had become more serious.

"But hot while it lasts," returned his companion.

"That 'Shades of Death' fellow must have been scorched pretty badly to give up as he did after that fashion."

"Oh, he wasn't anybody," replied Harker, contemptuously. "If he hadn't pluck enough to stand the women, why didn't he close up and cart his goods off to some other town where people mind their own business? But to waste good liquor after that fashion was simply contemptible. The man was a fool."

"Fool or no fool, he couldn't stand the praying women. And, what is more, he isn't the only one who has caved in. They're doing it in more places than I can count on my ten fingers, and hundreds of saloon-keepers who were piling up money three or four weeks ago are out of business and sucking their thumbs to-day. No use getting excited or growling over it. Fact is fact, and we can't make anything else out of it."

"Oh, you were always easily scared," was the answer to this. "But I'm not afraid. If there's going to be a fight here, one man is ready for the fray, and that man is Daniel Harker. When he shows the white feather, the women's war in Delhi will be over."

"Do you want to buy me out?" asked the other. "I'll sell cheap."

"What will you take?"

"Cost of stock and fixtures, good-will for nothing. Tip-top run of custom."

"Pshaw, Phil! you're not in earnest?"

"Try me. Make your bid, and we won't stand on a little discount."

"What's that you're talking about?" asked Barney Dare, coming over to the table where the two men sat talking.

"Phil Grubb wants to sell out. Do you know of any one who'd like to get a first-rate stand?" replied Harker.

"Sell out! What for?"

"He's scared."

"What about?"

"Afraid of the crusaders."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the little man, putting his hands to his sides and bending forward to give his merriment greater freedom. "These praying women, you mean?"

"Yes."

Then Mr. Dare straightened himself up and proceeded to give his opinion of the women and the

new business upon which they had entered. We would like to record that opinion here, but it was delivered in forms of language so striking and peculiar as to make it unfitted for our pages, and so the speech will have to go unreported. It was received with marked approval by most of the men present. Phil Grubb looked a little shame-faced, but the tirade of Barney Dare did not put any more confidence into his heart.

Within an hour the sayings and doings at Mr. Wilder's church were reported and discussed in all the bar-rooms in town. Put on what bravado he would, every saloon-keeper had a feeling of uneasiness and insecurity. Two or three of the principal and "most respectable" of these good citizens called upon the authorities, and asked for legal interference in case an effort was made to obstruct their business. They did not get the outspoken assurances of protection "in their vested rights" that they desired. Men in office are not indifferent to public sentiment, and it was manifest in the very commencement of this movement that the majority of the people would give it their countenance and support.

The handful of men in Delhi to whose interests all other interests had been so long subordinated

began to feel their power shaken. Public feeling and public sentiment were going against them. Every man and woman who had listened that morning to the calm but strong utterances of Mr. Wilder and Mrs. Green had a new impression of the curse to which the people were bound. Mrs. Green's "grand indictment" of the enemy under the tread of whose iron heel lay hundreds of bleeding hearts in Delhi had roused almost to indignation every listener to whom her impressive voice came. From this indictment one took this count and another that, and before night rehearsed them in the ears of thousands. Delhi was no longer ignorant, no longer asleep. A trumpet blast had sounded in the ears of her citizens, and all were awake now.

CHAPTER XI.

LUKE STERLING had not been seriously injured. In falling forward upon his face he struck against a sharp stone, which cut a severe gash over one of his eyes. He had not been able to get as much liquor as usual in his wanderings from bar to bar, and so was only partially stupefied by drink. The blood that flowed over his face alarmed him, and on rising to his feet he made his way home as quickly as his unsteady feet would carry him.

The shock of his appearance, with his face a mass of gore, proved, as we have seen, more than the overwrought nerves of his poor wife could bear, and nature kindly laid upon her the blessing of unconsciousness.

Mrs. Payne was not as tender of the wretched man as his wife would have been. Her pity was for the unhappy victim of his besottedness, and she had none to spare for him. Her first concern was for Mrs. Sterling, whom she lifted from the floor and carried into the adjoining bedroom. She was

turning to get water to dash in her face, when a frightened scream from Alice, who had awakened from sleep, caused her to run back into the room she had just left. The child had started up and sat looking, with a terror-stricken countenance, at her father.

This would not do; for the child's sake, if not for his own, Mrs. Payne saw that care for him was then most pressing; so, bringing water, she made him bend his face over the vessel containing it while she washed away the blood.

"It's only a cut on your forehead," she said. "There! hold this cloth against it while I attend to your wife."

And she left Mr. Sterling to go to his wife and endeavor to break her fainting fit, but not before quieting Alice, which she did with a few words, causing her to lie down and turn her face to the wall.

Mrs. Sterling rallied very slowly from this shock. It was past midnight before she opened her eyes and looked up into the face of Mrs. Payne with signs of intelligence. Her good neighbor took her hand, and pressing it tenderly, bent down and whispered,

"Don't stir; Alice is asleep, and so is her father. It was only a little cut on his forehead. I washed off the blood and tied it up for him. He hadn't been drinking as much as usual, and maybe good will grow out of this. The darkest hour comes just before daylight, you know."

Mrs. Sterling pressed the hand of her neighbor, then shut her eyes. Mrs. Payne saw her lips moving, and knew that her heart was going up to God in prayer.

The morning which broke on that poor little home found Alice much better than on the night before and Mr. Sterling penitent and in great trouble of mind about his son. He would have gone early to see Hanlan and beg for George's release from jail, but the fall and blow on his forehead had jarred his brain; and when he started to walk, the motion made him dizzy.

"Don't be in a hurry," Mrs. Payne urged, when Mrs. Sterling offered to go herself to the saloon-keeper. "There'll be no trouble in getting the boy out. But if he were my son, I'd let him take a spell there."

"Oh, but the disgrace, Mrs. Payne—the disgrace!" sobbed Mrs. Sterling.

"You've got all that as it is, and his staying there a few hours longer, or a few days, which might be better, won't increase it a single particle; so just keep quiet for a while."

As for the boy, who had been induced by a fellow-apprentice to come into town and see what was to be seen at the taverns, he was, as might be supposed, in no small trouble and anxiety. The apparition of his mother, with her pale, anxious face, the rough treatment which she had received at the hands of the saloon-keeper, his own quick anger, which caused him to assault Hanlan, the severe punishment he had received and the long hours of imprisonment that followed, were quite enough to set him far down in the valley of fear and humiliation. The boy loved his mother, but, like many other boys, was not as thoughtful of her as he might have been, and when absent and among companions of his own age easily led away. No sleep came to him as he lay in his narrow cell. What troubled him most was the bitter sorrow which he knew was lying like a heavy weight upon his mother's heart. Her face, as he caught a glimpse of it while being roughly carried off by the constable, marked by the pallor of death,

haunted him all night. He could not turn away from the frightened eyes nor shut them from his view.

He was walking restlessly about his cell a little after nine o'clock, his breakfast of bread and coffee untasted, when the jailer came in, saying, a little roughly, but in an undertone of kindness,

"You can leave here now; and if you'll take my advice, you'll keep away from taverns. They're bad places, and the boys who go there generally turn up here before they get through."

Mrs. Sterling, who had waited until about this time, could bear the suspense no longer, and was getting ready to go out and see if anything could be done for the boy, when the door was pushed slowly open, and George came in. He did not speak, but stood and looked at his mother with such sorrow and suffering in his eyes as turned into pity all blame that might have been in her heart. She held out her arms eagerly, while a flush of joy warmed the ashen pallor of her face. Slowly the boy came toward her. He could not keep back the tears that were beginning to blind him.

"Oh, mother!" fell from his lips as he laid his face upon her bosom and cried bitterly.

Mr. Sterling, who was lying on a bed in the next room—he was not able to walk about for dizziness —on hearing the voice of his son, called out eagerly,

"George! George! Is that you, George?"

"Yes, father," answered the boy.

"Come here; I want to see you."

Mrs. Sterling let the boy go in to see his father alone. It was in her heart that good might come to both if left to themselves, so she passed him in and remained upon the outside.

"Sit down, George, and tell me all about this business," said the father. There was nothing harsh or accusing in his voice.

George sat down close by the bedside, and as he did so Mr. Sterling reached out and took one of the boy's hands. He made one or two attempts to speak, but was not able to control his voice. In spite of all he could do to keep them back, tears were rolling down George's face. At last the father said,

"My son, I'm not going to scold or blame you. That won't do any good. But I want you to tell me all about how you came to be at Hanlan's last night."

George told his story, keeping nothing back.

He and two or three of the boys at Salter's shop had crept into a passing wagon and ridden into town, as they had often done before, to go about among the saloons, seeing the people, playing at dominoes and getting what fun they could. They had each taken a glass of beer at Jimmy Hanlan's.

When he had finished, Mr. Sterling, who was still holding his hand tightly, said,

"My son, if we could all die here to-day, you and your mother and Alice and I, it would be better than for you to walk forward along the path your feet have entered. It leads only to shame and sorrow, to wretchedness and ruin."

Mr. Sterling lost his voice for a moment or two, but recovering himself, went on:

"You have always been a good boy, George. You love your mother, and I am glad you were brave enough to defend her last night when that brutal wretch put his hands on her and insulted her."

The boy drew himself up, and a flash of mingled indignation and pride went over his face.

"For your mother's sake, George!"

Mr. Sterling said this with a strong appeal in his voice. The boy understood him, and replied,

"For her sake I would do anything, father. But—but—"

And the father understood his boy as well. What could he do? What help rested in his weak hands?

"Come closer, my son. Let me say it now just for you;" and Mr. Sterling drew George nearer to him. His voice was low and earnest as he went on:

"You are old enough to understand, and I'm going to talk to you. There is one thing you can do, George; I've been thinking it all over this morning. You can help me to help your mother."

"How, father?" asked the boy, with an eager flush in his face.

"I could help her and you and all," said the poor man, beginning to tremble with excitement. "It's in me yet;" and he threw out one of his hands. "But, my son"—his voice became inexpressibly sad—"your poor father isn't strong as he used to be—strong in his mind, I mean. His heart is all right. He loves you all, and would be to you the best father in all the world if—if—"

He could not contain himself, but cried out in a kind of wild despair, causing his wife to come

in hurriedly. There was a look of alarm on her face.

"Polly! Sit down here, Polly," said Sterling as soon as she appeared. She saw that he was all broken down in his feelings. "I was just saying to George that I am not as strong as I used to be. You know how it is, Polly. I try—God knows I try!—but it doesn't seem to be of any use. I've got good stuff in me yet. I could lift you all up again, and make you as happy as the day is long, if it wasn't for the cursed liquor shops. I'd give the world if I could walk past them and not feel a drawing to go in of which no man who has not felt it can have the least conception. If we were somewhere else, somewhere out of Delhi, anywhere but in a town the streets of which are lined with taverns, I might be able to reform my wretched life, but here it is impossible. No, I won't say that, either."

And he turned to his son with a new hope shining in his eyes.

"I see a way."

He caught up George's hand again, and held it tightly.

"Only yesterday," he went on, "Mr. Bradford,

who knows what's in me, said, 'If you'd only let rum alone, Luke Sterling, there isn't another man in this town I'd rather have in my store.' Just think of that! If I could stand up and stay up, wouldn't the days be bright again? And George is going to help me to stand up and to stay up. He isn't going back to Salter's again. He's going to be his father's good angel. Ain't you, my boy?"

Mrs. Sterling thought him wandering in his mind, and her countenance grew anxious and fearful.

"If I can do anything to help you and mother," replied George, "just say what it is." He spoke in no uncertain way.

"I want you," said the father, dropping his voice and looking very earnest, "to go out with me to-morrow—I shall not be well enough until then—and stay with me all the while I'm out. I shall go and see Mr. Bradford, who said he'd like to have me in his store; and if you'll promise him, George, that you'll go every morning with me, and stay all the while I'm there, and go backward and forward with me, morning, noon and night, I know he'll give me a chance. And I shouldn't wonder if he'd give you a chance too, and pay you

two or three dollars a week to help in the store. I can stand, I'm sure, if I've got you with me always. I shall feel stronger; and if I'm tempted, I'll just take hold of your arm, and that will keep me firm."

The boy stood up, rising with a quiet strength, and bending a little forward, answered:

"If that is all, father, I'm ready."

"And you'll not be ashamed to be seen always going about with me?"

The boy turned and looked at his mother. If he had felt a moment's weakness, it all went from his heart at sight of the almost glad surprise that beamed in her face.

"If my father is all right, what have I to be ashamed of? Oh no; I shall only be too glad and proud."

When, on the day following, the church bells were ringing out the summons that set all Delhi in commotion, Mr. Sterling stood talking with Mr. Bradford, his son George by his side. He was sober and in his right mind, and Mr. Bradford, touched by the bearing of the boy and assured by the earnest promises made by both, determined to give the poor inebriate another chance to recover

himself, and promised to make an opening for him on the next day.

As the boy and his father went away, walking side by side, Mr. Bradford said to a gentleman who came in at the moment,

"There's a case that makes one feel as if he'd like to bury every rum shop in the land as deep as Tophet."

"Ah! Anything particularly bad in the case?"

"Yes; the man you saw going out was ten years ago better off than I am, and had a larger store and a finer run of custom. He owned and lived in one of the prettiest houses in the place. To-day—or; rather yesterday,—he was a miserable drunkard. The handsome residence he built and beautified is owned and lived in now by a saloon-keeper who at one time was a porter in his store, while his own wife and children are in the most desperate poverty."

"He didn't look as if he were as low down as you say."

"No; he is trying once more to reform. How often he has tried it would be hard to tell, but every effort heretofore has been unavailing. There were too many temptations in Delhi—too many

saloons standing with wide-open doors; and he was not strong enough to resist their allurements. Now he is going to make a new trial and in a new way, and you might guess a week before coming upon what it really is."

"Then I won't try," said the man, "for that would be wasting more time than I have to spare just now."

"Well, you see, the boy you noticed with that man is his son, and he's going to come and go with him every day, and never let him pass a tavern without being by his side. He is to be the back-bone of good resolution to his father."

The man shook his head.

"It won't work," he replied.

"I'm afraid not. But for all that, I'm going to give the thing a trial. While there is life there is hope. And besides, this effort of a boy to save his father has touched my feelings. There was no weak shamefacedness on his part, but a strength and manliness and loving regard that moved me deeply. He shall have another chance."

"I don't wonder," remarked the man, "that in view of such a case you wished all the liquor saloons in Delhi buried deep in Tophet."

"They're an awful curse," said Mr. Bradford; "and think of the class of men in our community who make gain by a traffic that hurts everything it touches, that eats up the substance of the people, that sucks out the juices of prosperity, leaving everywhere only dryness and putrefaction! In destroying the power of useful service in the man you saw just now, society has been robbed by this traffic of a good citizen worth to it more than all the thirty men who are permitted to carry it on. In moral tone and intellectual culture, in good social influence and in efforts to increase the prosperity and promote the happiness of our town, he was of more value to us than a thousand such men as these. Nay; you multiply them only to multiply ruin. To give them power over such a man is a crime against society."

"What's the meaning of that bell?" inquired the other as Mr. Bradford ceased speaking. "It's been ringing now for over five minutes. Something unusual at this hour."

"I shouldn't wonder if it was a call for the crusaders," remarked a clerk who stood near, and a half-amused smile came into his face.

"The crusaders!" exclaimed the man. "You're

not in earnest. The cyclone, as some have called it, hasn't reached here."

"That's a rallying call, I imagine," replied the young man. "I thought from what I heard last night that something was in the wind."

"Whose church is it?" asked Mr. Bradford as he listened to the sound of the bells.

"Mr. Wilder's," replied the clerk.

"Ah! If that's so, it means something; and if Mr. Wilder is going to take a leading part in a crusade upon rum in Delhi, it means a great deal."

Mr. Bradford took up his hat as he added:

"I'm going to see for myself."

CHAPTER XII.

THE meetings called at the various churches on the second day were all largely attended, and those who had anything to say against the common enemy had full opportunity to be heard. The most touching and forcible appeals and denunciations came from women who, stirred and excited by a new hope of succor and defence, stood forth in the large assemblages and told their tales of heart-ache and sorrow and wrong with that moving pathos that suffering always gives. Pale, wan faces and wet eyes added power to spoken words, and men and women who had been indifferent before were now thrilled to the heart, and hundreds who had been used to speaking lightly of intemperance made solemn vows to enroll themselves among its bitterest enemies.

The recommendations of the initial meeting were adopted. A committee of three of the best and wisest women was appointed by each of the churches, and these women met at Mr. Wilder's

church in the evening to confer together and arrange the preliminaries of a campaign. Mrs. Judge Hanson, a clear-seeing, resolute woman, up to whom almost every one looked for leadership, had fully digested a plan of action, which was adopted almost without debate. It was this: The exact number and location of the saloons, with the names of their proprietors, were first to be ascertained. Then the work of closing two or three or four of these was to be assigned to each of the churches, and the movement against them was to be as nearly simultaneous as possible. In order that there might be no delay, a committee of three ladies, Mrs. Judge Hanson being one of the number, was instructed to ascertain at an early hour on the following morning the location of each saloon, and to give notice at a ten o'clock meeting of all the churches the special duty which had been assigned to each.

All this could not be going on without the knowledge thereof finding its way into every nook and corner of Delhi. The *Eagle* had its reporters at the various women's meetings, and gave full details of what was said and done in its regular morning issues. Its tone was considerably changed, and

some of the more "respectable" saloon-keepers, who had depended on the conservative editor and fully counted on his standing up for law and order and the sacredness of vested rights, saw with chagrin, if not dismay, the palladium of their safety giving way. The *Eagle* admitted that there were too many saloons in Delhi, and that their suppression would be a public benefit. The editor could not fully approve the means that were about being used against them. Still, it was not to be denied that women had suffered terribly from their presence, and that no one could blame them for trying to root them out, whether by fair means or foul.

While the women held counsel in the churches, excitement ran high in all the saloons, and passion and denunciation were strong. Men of low and brutal instincts poured out their torrents of blasphemy, and some, lower and viler than the rest, made threats of outrages and indecencies that, if attempted, would have brought down upon them a swift vengeance from an indignant and excited people. Some with cooler heads looked, as such men always look when danger approaches, right into the face of the enemy, measured his strength and counted the cost of a battle. Before the cru-

sade began two or three of these had sold out their stock of liquors at a heavy sacrifice and closed their doors. But the larger number waited for the onset, and many of these, too dull to perceive the under-current of force that was impelling the movement, or confident in their strength to resist it, swore to maintain their ground if, to use their own words, "all hell were to set itself against them." Among these was Jimmy Hanlan.

While the storm-clouds gathered, most of the saloons were filled with curious and excited people, who went to see and hear and discuss the impending movement. A larger amount of liquor than usual was sold, and the saloon-keepers reaped a rich harvest. But on the morning of the day when it was well known that all was ready, and that a descent of praying women was to be made on the saloons, most of the bar-rooms, particularly the "respectable" ones, had few customers. Men of respectability and social standing—fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers—were not particularly desirous of being found inside of a tavern when the women made their appearance.

Jimmy Hanlan was feeling a little nervous. There had been a crowd in the bar-room from an

early hour, coming and going, but as nine o'clock approached it began to thin off; and when the bells of every church in town rang out, man after man dropped away, each, as he left, throwing back upon Jimmy a jest or a warning, until the saloon-keeper found himself nearly alone. Glancing from the windows, he could see little knots of curious and expectant men and boys standing at the corners of the streets, most of them looking toward his house as they talked earnestly together. He did not have to wait very long after the bells of the various churches rang out in concert their clanging peals, making for his ears a frightful discord. Only a few minutes passed before the doors opened, and ten women, with Mrs. Rhoda Green at their head, entered his saloon, followed by a crowd of men and boys, who pressed in after them.

Coming forward without any excitement in her manner, Mrs. Green stood before Hanlan. Her face, so pure and saintly, had in it an elevation and dignity that at once subdued the man and took from him the power to be either rude or insolent.

"Mr. Hanlan," she said, in a calm, respectful, but very serious tone of voice, "we, all of us

women who have suffered, in consequence of the liquor traffic in Delhi, beyond anything that words have power to express, have come to make an appeal to you."

She paused, looking at Hanlan for some moments. He did not reply, and she went on:

"We have come to ask you, in the name of hundreds of sorrowing and heart-broken women whose husbands, sons or fathers have been ruined by drink, and for whose reformation there is no hope while you and the men engaged in your business set temptation in their way—to ask you to abandon this hurtful traffic and give us back our beloved ones again healed and in their right minds. Oh, sir, give heed to us! You are a man capable of better and nobler work than this. Be a true man—a useful man. Let your work be a blessing, and not a curse, to your fellow-citizens."

The hard, heavy face of Jimmy Hanlan was visibly disturbed. But he had no thought of capitulation. The assault had come a little differently from what he had expected. In his fancy he had seen the women rushing in pell-mell, dropping down upon their knees in true dramatic style and making an effort to pray him out. But a quiet appeal like

this had not been counted upon. Still, he had no thought of acceding to Mrs. Green's request, and when she was done answered in a respectful manner that there might be two opinions about the hurtfulness of his business, and that shutting up saloons wasn't going to keep men from drinking. If they wanted liquor, they would get it somewhere.

To this Mrs. Green briefly replied, and then asked Hanlan if he would permit them to sing and pray in his bar-room.

"Oh yes!" he returned, regaining his freedom of manner. "Sing and pray if it will do you any good." The coarseness of his nature cropped out a little.

All was still for a few moments. Mrs. Green stepped back from the counter where she had been talking with Hanlan and joined her sisters. Then rose her clear, sweet voice, taking up the words of the hymn,

"Nearer, my God, to thee!"

one voice after another coming in, until the whole company of women filled the saloon with a song of the sanctuary. At its close they knelt. Men bowed their heads or turned their faces away. A feeling of awe and reverence crept into every heart.

There was a penetrative sphere which none could resist.

"Dear Lord and Saviour," prayed Mrs. Green, kneeling, with upturned face, and speaking in a hushed but very clear voice, "we come to present before thee a petition for help. Our hearts are heavy with sorrow. There is a sin among us that is hurting the people more than the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment in the tent of Achan hurt the children of Israel, and we implore thee to remove it from the people. Let thy Spirit touch the hearts of the men who are dealing out to our sons and our husbands that which biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. Show them the evil of what they are doing. Touch their hearts with pity. Comfort and help and succor all upon whom the curse of this awful traffic rests to-day, and, O Lord! come speedily to their rescue. Give us, thy servants, strength and courage and patience to persevere in this work to which at thy bidding, as we truly believe, we have now set our hands. Let us not grow weary because of discouragement, nor afraid because of opposition. In thy strength we will hold on to the end. Especially do we pray for the owner of this saloon. O Lord! open his

eyes to see the awful magnitude of the evil he is doing, and touch his heart with pity and repentance. His soul, priceless in value, his soul for which thou didst die upon the cross, is in danger of perishing. Thou canst not save him while he is engaged in the work of destroying thy image in the souls of men. Oh, pity him and turn him into a better way. And pity us all."

Jimmy Hanlan bent his head forward as the prayer began; it bent lower as the prayer progressed. He felt a strange pressure upon his feelings—a sense of constriction and suffocation. When it was over, the women rose from their knees and sang with thrilling effect,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

Then, advancing to the saloon-keeper, Mrs. Green said,

"Again we beg of you, Mr. Hanlan, to give up this business. You cannot hurt others as you are now doing without hurting yourself."

But Hanlan, who was deeply disturbed, only waved his hand impatiently.

"May God give you a better mind, my friend," Mrs. Green returned, in her gentle but impressive

way, "and I believe he will. Think it over more seriously, and we will see you again to-morrow."

"Oh, you needn't trouble yourselves," replied Jimmy, with a look of almost blank surprise. "It won't be of the slightest use. I can answer you now as well as to-morrow. What you ask cannot and will not be done—no, not if you sing and pray from now till the crack of doom."

"We shall see," replied Mrs. Green, with a thrill in her soft, steady voice that jarred on the excited nerves of the saloon-keeper.

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,"

was then sung, and a hundred voices inside and out of the saloon joined in the doxology.

Then this little band of heroic women addressed themselves to the crowd of men and boys who had followed them into the saloon, and solicited each one to sign a pledge neither to drink nor traffic in intoxicating liquors. To their joy, many, moved and influenced by the scene they had just witnessed, and impressed as they had never before been with the evils and dangers attendant on the use of alcohol in any of its seductive forms, signed the pledge. Twenty names was the reward of this effort.

From the "Hanlan House" the band of women crossed to a saloon that stood on one of the opposite corners, the crowd by this time largely increased.

The man who kept this saloon was named Jacobs. He had also among his customers a goodly number of Delhi's merchants, lawyers, clerks and men of property and standing, and he had gathered enough from what some of them had said in regard to the praying crusade, as it was called, to be well assured that if any of their wives and daughters, some of whom would undoubtedly go into the work if it got a start, received insult or rough treatment at the hands of the liquor men, something worse than singing and praying would happen. So he, like Jimmy Hanlan, took counsel of prudence; and when Mrs. Green and her little band of praying sisters entered his bar-room, he received them kindly and gave them permission to sing and pray, but firmly declined to accede to their request to close his saloon and abandon the business.

Faithfully did they admonish, earnestly did they plead with him, and fervently did they pray that God would move him to repentance and a

change of life, so that he might be a blessing, and not a hurt, to the people. Men who watched his face closely, as the women prayed for and talked with him, saw that he was more deeply affected than any casual observer imagined; and when they went out, he put on no air of bravado and indulged in no angry remarks. His face wore a very thoughtful expression, and as soon as he could conveniently do so he left the bar and retired to a private room where he could be alone. Here an acquaintance sought him for the purpose of having a good laugh over the occurrence of the morning, but he found him in no mood for jesting or merriment.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed his friend; "don't put on such a long face. Hold your ground like a man. What are singing and praying, that you need care for them? Mere breath."

"They might sing and pray in their churches until doomsday," was the reply to this, "and it would be only breath so far as I'm concerned. But this praying and talking to God in the strange, familiar way these women did a little while ago, speaking to him with the assured confidence that one speaks to a powerful friend, and asking him to come to their relief against enemies who were

destroying their husbands and sons and fathers, and doing this right in your bar-room, makes you feel a little uncomfortable, to say the least of it. I don't think I could stand up to this sort of thing long."

"Then you might as well knock under at once," replied his friend, "for this sort of thing will go on, if the women here pattern by what's being done in other places, for weeks, if not longer."

"For weeks!" exclaimed the saloon-keeper, with a look of dismay.

"You don't imagine," returned the other, "that women who have the courage to set out on so extraordinary a crusade as this are going to halt and turn back after a single day's march, or give up the conflict after the first battle? If you do, you will find yourself grievously mistaken. It's going to be the bitterest fight you ever had. So gird on your armor and stand up like a man, or else pull down your colors and surrender at once."

"What would you do?" asked Jacobs.

"Oh, I'd fight to the bitter end. Never backed down in my life."

"And never were beaten?"

"Can't exactly say that, but I've whipped

oftener than I've been whipped; and as I'm known to be a good fighter, bullies don't meddle with me."

"But heavens and earth, Ned! How is one going to fight with a lot of women? If they came with brooms, rolling-pins and frying-pans, a fellow might have some chance of beating them off. But one is helpless under the assault of a dozen pretty girls and saintly old women whose only weapons are prayer and praise. When I saw them kneeling down on the bare floor in my bar-room, and heard them ask God, in such a pleading, tender, sorrowful way, to give me another and a better heart, that I might turn from my sin and no longer hurt the bodies and souls of their sons and fathers and husbands, I had the strangest feelings I ever knew. I cannot describe them."

"Hope you're not going to get religion?" said his companion, with an amused laugh.

"No fear of that. I'm not one of that kind," replied the saloon-keeper, trying to laugh in return. "Couldn't get along on religion."

"Of course not. Ties a fellow up too close."

"Seriously, Ned, there's no use talking about it; I can't stand up to this fight. If I could hit back, there'd be some chance for me. But if I've got to

face these women and their singing and praying every day for a week or a month, I might as well strike at once. I'm not brave enough for that."

"Hark!" said the other, turning his head to listen, as a full chorus of women's voices rose clearly on the air, singing,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

The two men started up and went to a window from which they could look down upon the street.

"After Abe Singer. But he's been too much for them," exclaimed one of the men.

Abe Singer's saloon was nearly opposite. Its owner, on seeing the women approach, had shut and locked his door. The expedient was in his case about as good a defence as that adopted by the ostrich, which, it is said, seeks for safety by hiding his head under the sand when too hotly pursued by hunters.

"I don't know," Jacobs replied; "I'd about as lief have them singing and praying inside as on the pavement. We may shut our doors and stop our ears if we will, but that won't stop other people's ears nor hinder the influences these women are setting in motion."

"See," remarked the other. "That's Abe's wife at the window over the saloon, and that's his daughter standing by her side. A right pretty girl, isn't she?"

Strong, clear and jubilant rose the singers' voices, and here and there, from one side and another, rising from the crowd of men who filled the street, a deep, half-repressed manly bass would come in. As verse after verse was sung the number of male voices increased; and when the singers came to the last stanza—

> "Let every kindred, every tribe,
> On this terrestrial ball,
> To him all majesty ascribe,
> And crown him Lord of all"—

there swelled up the grandest chorus that had ever been heard in Delhi.

When the hymn was ended, the women knelt upon the pavement in front of Singer's saloon, and as they knelt the vast concourse grew still, heads were reverently uncovered and men stood, bowed and serious.

Jacobs and his friend, who stood looking down upon this impressive scene, could not hear the words of the prayer that was offered up, but they felt strangely touched and moved.

"Crying, as I live!" said the friend, in a low voice.

"Who?" asked Jacobs.

"Singer's wife."

Jacobs turned his eyes to the window above the spot where the women were kneeling, and could see tears falling over the cheeks of Mrs. Singer. The daughter's face was hidden by her handkerchief, but it was plain to see that she also was deeply affected.

"Poor Abe! I pity him. Locking his door won't save him. While guarding his front an enemy has come in at the rear."

"What do you mean?" asked Jacobs.

"You're dull. Don't you see that his wife and daughter are captured already."

"Oh yes," Jacobs answered, in an undertone and in a half-absent way.

The prayer over, the women stood up and commenced singing the long-metre doxology:

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him, above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

Instantly the crowd joined in, and these solemn

words of thanksgiving to the tune of "Old Hundred" rose in a very tempest of melody on the air. It was a scene so strange and deeply impressive and so full of solemnity that no one could be in the midst of it without feeling its power. Men who all their lives had made light of spiritual influences were moved now to tears, and scoffing was far from their lips.

Jacobs stood motionless as a statue while the great assembly in the street sang in a wild burst of enthusiasm. As their voices died away he turned to his friend and said, in a quick, firm voice,

"Go and tell those women that I'd like to see them."

"What?" The man looked at him in surprise.

"I want to see those women again; I've something to say to them."

"What is it?"

"No matter; you'll hear when I say it. Will you go, Ned?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, if you say so."

And off he went. Jacobs came down into the bar, in which a few men stood looking from the windows at the exciting scene outside. He took a position in front of his bar and stood leaning upon

it, waiting for Mrs. Green and her band of praying sisters. His face had lost its usual ruddy glow; his eyes were serious, his mouth set and resolved. He waited thus for only a short space of time. From the window he saw a hurried movement in the crowd, setting toward his saloon. Then he caught a glimpse of the band of women. A few moments afterward they entered, followed by a crowd of men, who pressed in and filled the room.

As Mrs. Green came forward Jacobs bowed respectfully.

"You wish to see us?" she said.

"Yes," he replied. "I've changed my mind."

His voice shook a little, and it was evident that his feelings were greatly disturbed. He saw a flash of light in Mrs. Green's face.

"This is not a good business. No one knows it better than I do. I drifted into it because I thought it would pay me better than anything else. But I never liked it, and never felt satisfied with myself, and now—" He paused for an instant, and then, in a firm voice, added, "*I'm going to give it up.*"

Hurrahs broke from the crowd of men who had entered the room. There were cheers for Jacobs

and clapping of hands and cries of "Bravo!" and "Good for the praying women!" From the saloon word was passed to the street, and the shouts of the multitude outside rose wildly upon the air.

Stepping forward, Mrs. Green took the hand of Jacobs and held it tightly until silence again fell upon the excited company. There were tears in her eyes and a quiver in her voice as she said,

"Thank God! thank God! May his blessing be upon you, and may he give you of this world's good things fourfold of what you lose to-day, and a life of heavenly joy for ever."

Then she knelt and in a few eloquent words thanked God for this great and signal victory. There was a gladness in her tones, an excess of joy thrilling in every modulation, that went from heart to heart with electric quickness. As she rose from her knees some excited man in the crowd, not waiting for the women to lead off, struck up the doxology, and

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,"

rang forth again. Outside, the people caught the infection and sent the chorus still more grandly to the skies.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT would fill twice the number of pages allotted to this book were we to follow the different praying-bands in their visits to the saloons that morning, and describe the novel and exciting incidents that occurred. Crowds attended them, as in the case of the little company whose movements we have recorded, and in nearly all cases the sympathy of the people was with the women.

When reports of the morning's work came in and the whole result was summed up, even the most sanguine were surprised. Out of thirty saloons six had closed, and over three hundred names had been signed to the pledge. Prayer-meetings were held at all the churches in the evening, the attendance being large in every case. The committee of women having the matter in charge made new arrangements for the crusade, giving it a more extensive organization. The town was thoroughly districted and the work carefully divided, so that it might be widespread and simultaneous. A hun-

dred women, in bands of from ten to fifteen, were to visit the saloons daily, going many times each day, persistently praying and singing and urging the proprietors to give up their hurtful business. To ten discreet and earnest women was assigned the work of visiting the wives of men engaged in the traffic and urging them to use their influence to induce their husbands to give it up. The business of others—and they numbered several hundreds—was to call upon every man and boy in Delhi and solicit signatures to the pledge, so cutting off as far as possible the demand for liquor and making the trade in it unprofitable. Each morning religious services were to be held in the churches and the presence and influence of prayer be brought everywhere to the people.

The second day's achievements were more remarkable than the first. Ten saloon-keepers abandoned their business, and over a thousand persons signed a pledge of total abstinence. The *Eagle* gave full reports of the work, under startling captions and with any number of exclamation points. Among other things it said, in giving a history of the second day's operations:

"It is impossible for the saloon-keepers to hold

their own against an assault so determined and so thoroughly organized as this. The women are too much for them. The liquor men are like an army in a beleaguered city with its supplies cut off and the enemy in untold numbers swarming every commanding height and battering at the gates. Nothing is left but to capitulate or starve. If this were a new thing, an untried experiment, they might resolve to test their capacity for resistance with the strength of the assault. But we can point them to more than a dozen towns where victory sits perched on the banners of the assailants, and to a score besides where the strongholds are falling one by one and resistance growing feebler every day.

"Our women are complete masters of the situation. They have said to their husbands, fathers, sons, brothers and lovers, 'Stand off and give us fair play. Don't, after your failure of years to limit or suppress a traffic the curse of which has driven us to desperation, put in your bungling hands now. Let us alone. And for God's sake, for humanity's sake, don't help the other side. All we ask of you is to see to it that women who use only prayers, sacred songs, tears, entreaty and expostulation, in the hope of saving their beloved ones from ruin,

shall not be met with insult or violence. This and nothing more.' And the husbands, fathers, sons and lovers have answered, 'Yea,' and 'Amen!' So the women, for once in their lives, are to have their will in Delhi. The ballot is now virtually in their hands, and their first use of it will be to close the saloons.

"We had a long interview yesterday with some of the leading spirits in this movement, and were profoundly impressed thereby. No levity, no weakness, no half heartedness, was manifested. The women are deeply in earnest, and the men have resolved to stand aside and give them a fair chance."

On the next morning, in giving an account of the third day's work, the *Eagle* said:

"The excitement was at fever-heat yesterday. Many places of business were closed, and all Delhi seemed to be on the street. At nine o'clock the clang of bells broke on the expectant people, and crowds pressed to the churches, where religious services were held. At half-past nine the praying-bands moved against the saloons. Five of the fifteen which had remained open on the day before were found with shutters up and signs down. At the doors of two of these the women were met by

the proprietors, who expressed penitence for the evil they had done, and signed a pledge never again to either drink or sell liquor. Then, in the presence of these women, they broke in the heads of their beer barrels and smashed their demijohns and bottles of ardent spirits, letting the contents flow upon the street. And all the while this was being done the women, joined by hundreds in the crowd, sang

'All hail the power of Jesus' name'

in a burst of exultation. After the last keg and the last bottle were broken the women knelt in the street, and after thanking God for giving them this victory, prayed for the men who had abandoned the work of ruin and death, and asked that they might receive double for all they had lost in this world, and, what was more and better, the peace of God in their hearts.

"At the close of the day only five saloons were open, Hanlan's, Ben Decker's and three of the worst holes in Delhi—dens where the vilest of the vile are to be found, kept by jail-birds and haunted by thieves. Except the 'Hanlan House,' there is not a decent saloon open in Delhi this morning. Jimmy fights hard, but there's no help for him.

We heard him swear yesterday that all hell couldn't drive him out; but as a gentleman who heard him remarked, 'Heaven, just now, seems to be stronger than hell in Delhi.' The odds are against Jimmy."

The *Eagle's* report of the fourth day's operations had the following:

"Ben Decker shut up shop, packed his goods, gave us his blessing and departed—left Delhi for Delhi's good. He was a bad fellow, and did more to debase and ruin a certain class of boys and young men than any other saloon-keeper in town. If our fair crusaders had done nothing more than run him off, the achievement would be worth all the effort they have yet made. Hanlan still holds out, though he doesn't get in three dollars a day. The women take turns in visiting him, squads of eight or ten relieving each other at short intervals, so that, from morning until night, all day yesterday Jimmy had to listen to singing, praying and persuasive talk. He's a plucky fellow according to some and mulish according to others. If he doesn't surrender to-day, the men are going to knock up a shanty and set it down in front of his saloon for the women to sing and pray in—build them a tabernacle, as it is called. The weather is too raw and cold, and the men don't

want their wives and daughters exposed any longer in the open air. Jimmy had better give it up. As we heard a gentleman say yesterday, he's bled the people long enough, and they're tired of leeching and cupping, and mean to have another and less exhaustive treatment.

"Of the three places besides Hanlan's that yet remain open two are expected to close to-day. The wife and daughter of one of the saloon-keepers have been at church every day, and are in much distress of mind. They have become awakened to a sense of the dreadful wrong of the traffic, and will not rest until the husband and father gives it up."

The day that followed was one of jubilation in Delhi.

On the night previous Hanlan had gone home early, leaving his two barkeepers in charge of the saloon, with direction to close at ten o'clock. He was feeling anything but comfortable in his mind. Though made angry often by the persistence of the singing- and praying-band, and fretted by their continued solicitations, he was not armor-proof against the subtle and penetrating force of a divine Spirit and power into the sphere of which he was continually being brought. Now and then a word spoken

in prayer would move him strongly. Convictions of wrong would seize upon him and startle him with their stern accusations, and in spite of every effort to dislodge these convictions he could not thrust them out of his mind. Broad glimpses of the evil he was doing would sometimes flash upon and startle him. Two or three times he had seen the pale and wasted face of Mrs. Sterling kneeling on the floor of his saloon, with her tearful eyes turned upward and her thin lips parted in prayer, and the fascination of her rapt, appealing look had held him until the image was burned so deeply into his memory that effacement was impossible.

He was not feeling at all comfortable in his mind as he took his way home that night. Mrs. Hanlan, who had been visited every day since the beginning of the crusade by ladies of the first standing in town, held out for a while. She was rude to insolence at first, but gradually gave way under the pressure of influences too strong to be resisted. Now she was against her husband, and urged him to give up the business.

Hanlan had been home for only a little while, and was sitting alone, moody, worried and depressed in spirits, when the door-bell rang, and soon after

three women, Mrs. Sterling, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Wilder, entered the room, followed by his wife, who had gone to the door. He started to his feet, while a shade of anger crossed his face. Before he had time to recover himself, Mrs. Sterling stepped forward, and standing close to him, said,

"James Hanlan, you have had your day and opportunity; give my husband a chance now. All this was ours once, and would have been ours to-day but for the stumbling-block you set at my husband's feet. Take it away, I beg of you in Heaven's name! We have suffered enough; I have suffered enough. What I once was, you and your wife know. Look at me now! Can you do so and keep dry eyes? You would be less than human if that were possible. And all the sin of this, James Hanlan, I lay at your door. Ah, if this were the worst! If my suffering and sorrow and despair were all! If there had been no wreck but mine! My poor, poor husband!"

The feelings of Mrs. Sterling were wrought to too high a pitch. At this mention of her husband she broke into a strong cry, and covering her face, wept and sobbed in uncontrollable passion.

"Let us pray," said Mrs. Wilder. All knelt,

Hanlan with the rest. It seemed to him as if a strong hand pressed him down.

"Great and good and all-powerful Lord and Saviour," Mrs. Wilder began, "touch our brother's heart and soften it by the influences of thy grace. Move him to repentance. Give him pity and tenderness. Let not the agonizing cry of our poor sister, thy servant, be uttered in vain. Show this man, O Lord! the peril in which his own soul stands. Let arrows of conviction penetrate his soul. Show him the awful danger of the wrath to come. Take away his heart of stone and give him a heart of flesh."

Here, a groan which Hanlan could not repress broke from his lips. At this, Sister Green rose to her feet and commenced singing, "Jesus, lover of my soul," the other two women rising and joining her.

Before the hymn was half through Hanlan was sobbing like a child.

"REDEEMED, REGENERATED AND DISENTHRALLED!" were the words standing out in large capitals that greeted the eyes of every reader who opened the Delhi *Eagle* on the next morning. The struggle was over and the victory won. The bells rang out their wild jubilation. Men clasped hands

in the street and gave each other joy. Services were held in all the churches, and songs of thanksgiving went up from thousands of lips and hearts.

"And what of all this?" we hear said. "When the enthusiasm dies away and society goes back into its old indifference, what is to hinder a return to the old order of things?"

Nothing, if Delhi goes back into her old indifference. But we believe better things of her. It will be easier to keep the enemy out than it was to drive him out. So much has been found that was lost, so much sorrow has given place to joy, so much of life's sweetness is flowing back into hearts that were full of bitterness for years, that there will be no sleeping at the outposts of Delhi. The enemy which her women fought with such desperate courage stands, they know, ready for ambuscade, surprise or open assault whenever he finds them off their guard, and they know, too, that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance," and do not mean to sleep.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

OF

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THE numerous friends of Mr. Arthur will hail with pleasure the publication of a complete list of his works, which will enable them at a glance to see the prices at which they can be had and to know in what manner to procure them.

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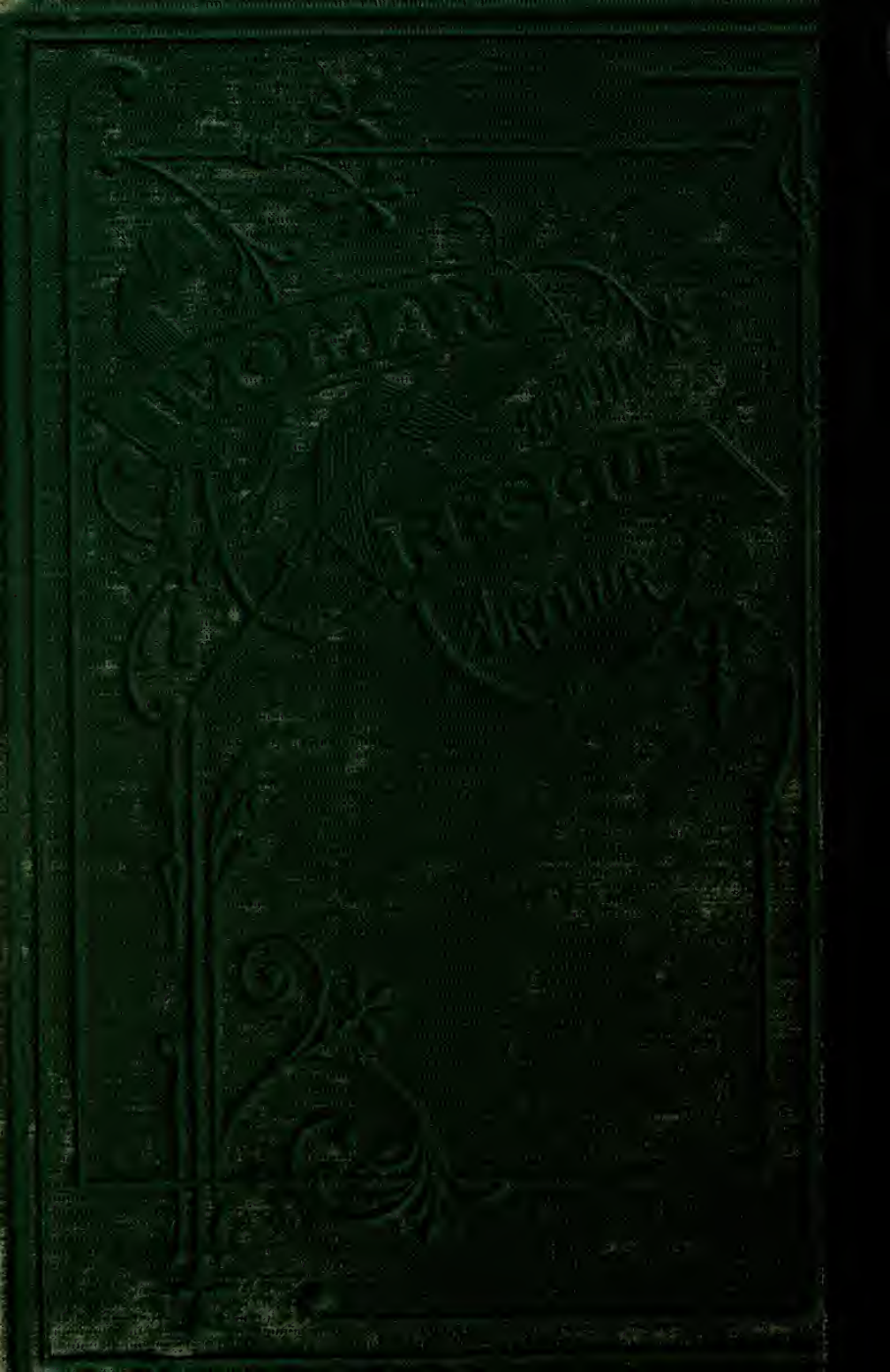
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